SIR ANTHONY EDEN

AUTHOR OF:

The Bernard Shaw Dictionary
Winston Churchill: a biography
The Way of the Dictators
The Innocence of Edith Thompson
Crowning the Queen
A.B.C. of the Coronation
The Friendships and Follies of Oscar Wilde

The Old Indomitable and his successor at the door of Number Ten

SIR ANTHONY EDEN

THE CHRONICLES OF A CAREER

LEWIS BROAD

WITH 30 ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

This book is an account, in narrative form, of the life of Sir Anthony Eden, so far as his career has been unfolded. It is an interim report made at mid-career. The subject matter of the major chapters has yet to be provided.

In no sense have I attempted an appraisal of Sir Anthony's work as Foreign Secretary. That must remain until fuller knowledge permits a reasoned estimate to be made.

The work of a Foreign Secretary is of a nature that is best presented in description or analysis. To make it conform with the requirements of narrative much adaptation is necessary. To keep the story moving, it has been necessary to select the facts and to omit those details of diplomat exchanges that are necessary for a study of foreign affairs.

The book is the outcome of a suggestion that I should write an account of Sir Anthony's career that would satisfy the curiosity existing in the United States of America about the personality of the Prime Minister-designate of Great Britain, who, as my work reached completion, succeeded to office on Sir Winston Churchill's resignation.

It is against the tradition of the past to write a biography of a statesman during his lifetime. There are, indeed, reasons for the tradition. Only an insensitive author can give complete expression to his opinions about the public figures of his time while they are still making their appearance on history's stage. Nor is it possible to reach a full understanding of events, of men and of their motives, until the records, state and private papers, have been made completely available. So it has come about that the publication of the biographies of public men has been delayed until they have gone so long from the scene that interest has begun to fade with the passing of the generation that knew them.

Beyond the mere gratification of public curiosity, there lies the deeper matter of the people's right to be made acquainted about the achievements and character of those who serve them in political

life. Pre-eminently is this the case with the man who fills the highest political office in the state. The Sovereign's prerogative and Parliament's support are subject to the final endorsement of the people.

At some date in the future that we hope may lie far ahead the biographer will write from full knowledge and in complete freedom concerning Sir Anthony Eden. Here, in this interim report, is the record of his public acts, supplemented by such testimony as has been made available concerning the circumstances in which he acted and the manner in which his decisions were reached.

In the last resort it is a man's acts that testify most surely to his character. The light and shade, the more subtle manifestations of personality, may be etched in later. But no man can be concerned in public life for a quarter of a century without disclosing the essential basis of his being. From this account, objectively presented, of public work rendered for the most part at the Foreign Office, the reader may form an estimate of the man recognized for so many years as the Prime Minister-in-waiting.

I should like to make expression of my indebtedness to those who have helped me by their advice or by the provision of material, in particular to the Bishop of Derby, the Dean of Christ Church, the Provost of Worcester, the Provost of Eton, Mr. Charles Reid and Mr. Don Iddon. Many gaps remain in the record of Sir Anthony's career. There is, for instance, no account of his service in France in the First World War. I should welcome assistance in making good these omissions for any future edition of this book.

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Biddenden,
Kent

April 1955

CHAPTER I

THE EDEN LINE

SIR ANTHONY EDEN has achieved many notable distinctions. He was the youngest Foreign Secretary of modern times and the youngest Adjutant in the British Army. He is the only Minister of the Crown who has won honours in Oriental languages, and who has been able to converse in their native tongue with Arab and Persian. His tenure at the Foreign Office in his three periods of service is one of the longest on record and his knowledge of the intricacies of international affairs has long been without parallel amongst the world's statesmen.

Another distinction is his—he is the enigma of British politics. No man in public life has continued to be so well known and yet so little known.

For over thirty years he has been a Member of Parliament. For nearly a quarter of a century he has occupied a front place on the public stage. Where statesmen of the world have gathered he has been present. He has passed from capital to capital and from conference to conference—Geneva, Teheran, Cairo, Washington, Yalta, San Francisco, Potsdam, even distant Bangkok. Since his youthful and elegant figure was first pictured at Geneva he has been the target of innumerable cameras. But the limelight that has shone on the public figure has not penetrated to the man beneath the attractive exterior that is known to the world.

A question mark has remained against his name—what is the nature of Anthony Eden? He became the successor-designate of Sir Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister-in-waiting, and as the years went by the question was repeated in another form—what might we expect of him when he came to occupy the first place?

Many who have followed the course of the career of the parliamentarian and Minister of the Crown have owned themselves baffled by the nature of the man. They credit him with many qualities—the excellence of his brain, his soundness as administrator, his skill as negotiator. These things they acknowledge and they say—"He has brains, we know, but has he guts?"

The acts of Sir Anthony Eden are on the record, but they have taken place on the international stage, that undiscovered country to whose bourne the man-in-the-street is little disposed to penetrate. The Foreign Office has not been the customary stepping-stone to the premiership. Since Rosebery and Salisbury held office, no Prime Minister on the list had previously served as Foreign Secretary. Ramsay MacDonald coupled the two posts in his first administration. Arthur Balfour was Foreign Minister ten years after he left 10 Downing Street. It is the Exchequer that has provided the most frequent path to power. Six of the nine Prime Ministers of the last half century served as Chancellor—Asquith, Lloyd George, Bonar Law, Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill.

To have controlled the nation's finances, rather than its foreign policy, has appeared to be a sounder qualification for the supreme post. The Exchequer has the advantage that it brings its holders more prominently under public scrutiny. The man who imposes taxes in the Budget is a figure of more intimate concern for the electors than the minister who concludes treaties. Sir Anthony would have been more familiar to the masses had he been engaged with problems of the people's food or their houses. The Foreign Office is reckoned to be a place apart, concerned but little with the trivialities that add up to life for the man-in-the-street.

It is the purpose of these pages to throw light on the Eden enigma and to discover the man beneath the public figure. Consider first the line of his ancestors and mark the compounding of the qualities that form the basis of Sir Anthony's character.

Anthony Robert Eden was born on June 12, 1897, within a few days of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. His birthplace was Windlestone, the family seat near Bishop Auckland in the Northern County of Durham. He was the fourth child and third son of Sir William Eden and his wife Sybil Frances, daughter of Sir William Grey.

On both sides he comes from ancestors who played an eminent part in the history and service of their country. Through his mother he is connected with Earl Grey, Prime Minister of the famous Reform Bill. He can also claim as relative Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Minister in the years before the First World War.

On his father's side he is descended from a north country family

whose sons have served the state in many fields during the last three centuries. The Edens began with a sturdy race, who, for three or four hundred years, lived on their estate in distant Durham, a border county where fighting was frequent, and where a family had need of strong armed sons to preserve itself through the troubled times of the Middle Ages, and against the marauding Scots from across the Border. Later, there came Cavaliers to serve their King in the wars with Parliament. The Edens prospered and rose in rank and responsibility under the Georges. About the year 1750 there was a quickening in the strain that produced a new high mark of achievement. In the last century a new infusion brought an artistic strain into the line.

These diverse influences have left their mark on the compound of the Eden character. But the outstanding and persistent quality has been devotion and ability in service of the country, which has been a tradition and an inspiration in the family. The Edens have provided generals and admirals for the forces, Bishops for the Church, and Ministers for the Cabinet. One Eden was Governor of Bengal, another was Governor-General of India. An Eden was Governor of Maryland at the time of the War of Independence; another, Governor of North Carolina, gave his name to Edenton. Two baronetcies and three peerages were conferred on members of the house.

Sir Anthony Eden has proper cause for pride in the name to which, in his turn, he has added lustre. The family historian traces back his descent to Robert de Eden, who was born during the long reign of the third Edward and who is known to have died in 1413, two years before the Battle of Agincourt. He was seized of three messuages and ten oxgangs of land in Preston-on-Tees, property that continued in family ownership through many generations.

The family flourished, adding to their estates by purchase and by marriage, both judiciously conducted, so that in Tudor times they were possessed of the Hall or Manor House of West Auckland, in addition to properties of Windlestone, Bellasis and Preston. In the Civil Wars the Edens fought for King Charles. One young Eden, Robert by name, was authorized in 1643, he then being twenty-seven years of age, to raise for the King a regiment of foot a thousand strong. Having backed the losing side, this Colonel Eden suffered deprivation of his estates under Cromwell, but he lived

long enough to join in the celebrations of the Restoration. The loyal services of the family were recognized by the conferment in 1672 of a baronetcy on Robert Eden, the Colonel's eldest son. This baronetcy is now held by Sir Robert's seventh successor, who is brother of Sir Anthony, the Prime Minister.

Sir Robert Eden, the first baronet, and his heir, Sir John Eden, both sat as Members of the House of Commons for the County of Durham. It was with the children of the third baronet that the name of Eden began to acquire wider fame. They were a generation of outstanding ability. The eldest of them, the fourth baronet, sat in three Parliaments for Durham. The second son became Governor of Maryland and was rewarded with a baronetcy for his services. The third son had a distinguished career in politics and diplomacy and was raised to the peerage as Lord Auckland. The fourth son was auditor of Greenwich Hospital. The eighth son served as Ambassador to several states of the Continent and was made a peer as Lord Henley. In the next generation the Edens were providing a numerous host of servants for Church and State.

There were few more able and versatile figures in the public life of his time than William Eden, first Lord Auckland (1744–1814). First studying law, he took up the then little considered subject of economics and established the National Bank of Ireland. Pitt sent him to France to negotiate a trade treaty and thought so well of him that he dispatched him as special envoy to Madrid, as head of a commercial mission to America and as Ambassador Extraordinary to the Hague. William became Minister of the Crown as Paymaster-General and it seemed that he might be linked by closer ties with the young Prime Minister.

It was with William's daughter Eleanor that Pitt had his solitary and unhappy love affair. He became devotedly attached to her, but she married another man. An estrangement developed between him and William Eden, who joined Pitt's opponents, serving as President of the Board of Trade in the Ministry of All the Talents.

His son George (1784–1849) continued the political successes of his father. He allied himself with the Whigs and served at the Board of Trade under Lord Grey of the Reform Bill. Melbourne made him First Lord of the Admiralty and sent him to India as Governor-General, an earldom being conferred on him.

Of the other children of the first Lord Auckland, Morton, Lord

Henley (1752–1821) won fame for his skill in diplomacy, serving at Copenhagen, Berlin, Vienna and Madrid. Robert John was Bishop successively of Sodor and Man and of Bath and Wells. Emily (1797–1869), the seventh daughter, was a traveller and writer of note, a celebrated hostess in Victorian London.

The direct descent of the baronets of the original West Auckland line came to an end with the fifth holder of the title, Robert Johnson Eden (1774–1844). He was lacking in the qualities of his brethren, a shy retiring person, with little interest in public affairs. The family were to hold it against him that he disposed of the Eden estate at Preston-on-Tees, with its three messuages and ten oxgangs of land. Ancestral past did not weigh with him as much as present prestige, for with the proceeds of the sale he provided the family with a seat at Windlestone, a mansion of noble proportions, finely sited on the brow of a hill looking out over parklands. Here, half a century later, Sir Anthony was born.

Sir Robert failed to provide for the continuance of his line, and, he dying unmarried, the baronetcy passed to the head of the junior branch of the family, Sir William Eden, fourth baronet of Maryland, who became sixth baronet of Bishop Auckland. The two baronetcies have since descended in direct line from father to son, the present holder, Sir Timothy Calvert, being eighth in the line of Bishop Auckland and sixth of Maryland.

Maryland was a British province of the Crown in the days (1769) when Robert Eden arrived at Annapolis with his young wife. She was the sister of Lord Baltimore, Lord Proprietary of Maryland, who made Robert his chief executive and Governor of the Province. Captain Eden, late of the Coldstream Guards, was warmly welcomed to his province, a local poet celebrating the occasion in lines that ended:

Long as the grass shall grow or river run,
Or blow the winds, or shine the sun,
May Eden and his sons here reign and stay,
Themselves as happy as the realms they sway.

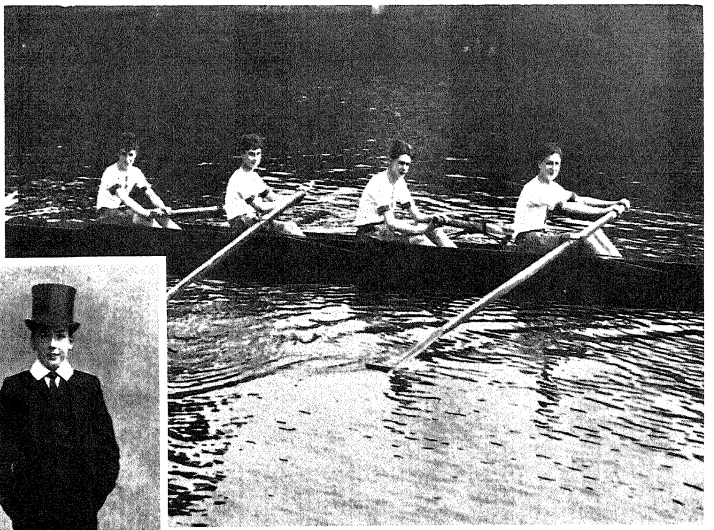
Captain Eden was in Maryland no more than five years before the intentions of the insurgent Americans made it necessary for him to sail for home. During his governorship he had proved himself

an able administrator, who in difficult times discharged his duties with tact and skill, winning the reputation of a man "easy of access, courteous to all, and fascinating in his accomplishments". He was acknowledged to have acquitted himself as well as could be "under difficulties that were thought here to be insurmountable", and he received a baronetcy that testified to King George the Third's approbation of his conduct. After the wars had ended in America's independence, Sir Robert returned to Maryland to seek the recovery of his properties that had been confiscated. While thus engaged he contracted a fever that proved fatal to him and he was buried (1784) at Annapolis, beneath the pulpit of the old Episcopal Church.

In passing, it may be noted that marriage with a daughter of the house of Baltimore invested succeeding generations of Edens, sons and daughters, with the title of Count or Countess of the Roman Empire. It came about in this fashion.

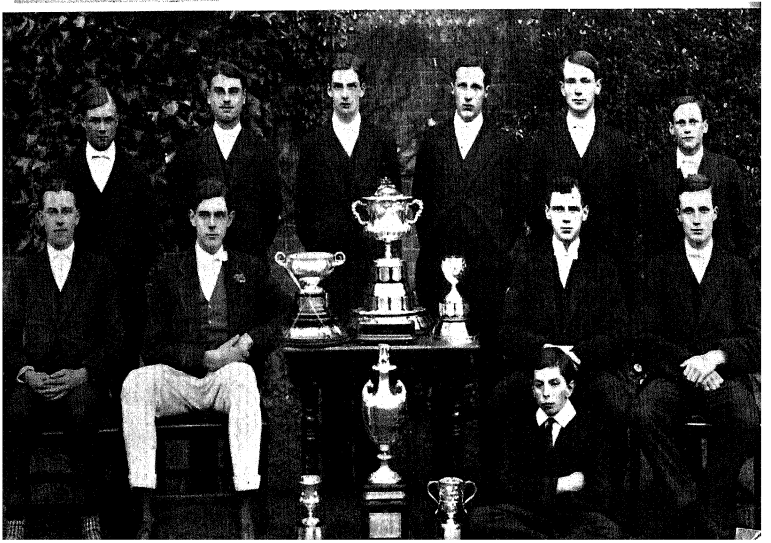
In the year 1595, Rudolph the Second, "by the mercy and favour of God, Elect Emperor of the Romans", rewarded the services of Sir Thomas Arundell with the title of Count. The patent conferring the title provided that it should be generously shared by his descendants—"the whole legitimate offspring and posterity, male and female, for ever". Sir Thomas, later Lord Arundell, had a daughter Anne, who by her marriage carried the title with her into the family of the Lords Baltimore, and thence it passed down the generations to Caroline, bride of Sir Robert Eden of Maryland. Through their posterity, in turn, it has descended to the Edens of this generation. By which means it has come about that, in common with the Edens of his line and with the other descendants of the Baltimores, Sir Anthony Eden is holder of the title of Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Edens have been distinguished for independence of outlook as well as by their abilities. One of the most intellectually distinguished was Frederick Morton (1766–1809), second holder of the Maryland baronetcy. He was one of those humanitarians of whom Lord Shaftesbury was the pre-eminent example. At a time when persons of rank were not generally concerned about the poorer classes, he spent his life in social investigations, studying the conditions of the labouring men. He wrote a book on the results of his inquiries, "The State of the Poor", a classic in this class of writing,

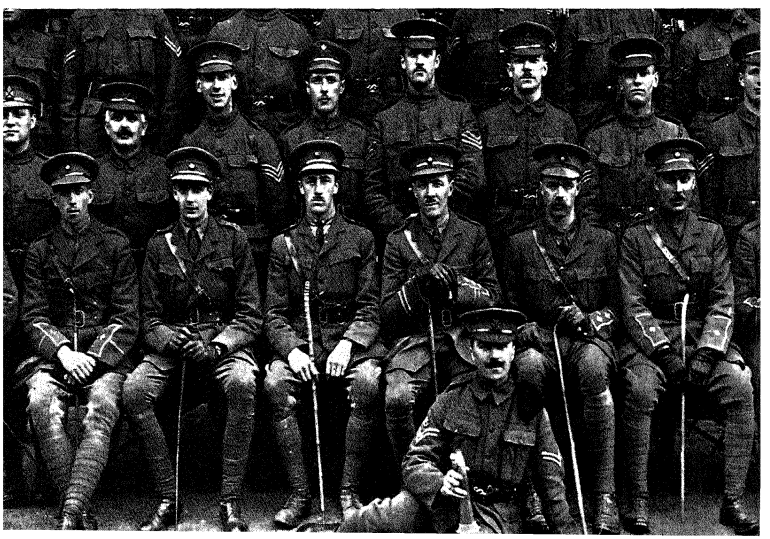


ETON DAYS

He was thirteen when he was photographed in his topper. A successful Wet Bob, he stands in the lower picture behind the trophies for which he had competed



In the First World War he was the youngest adjutant in the British Army. He was decorated with the M.C. and was promoted Staff Officer. He is third from the left in the front row in the group of officers and N.C.O.s of C Company, 21st (Service) Battalion, K.R.R.C., in 1916



one of the earliest works to draw attention to the distresses of the labouring classes during the earlier years of the industrial revolution. He was distinguished, says his biographer, for the benevolence of his disposition.

There is little beyond the circumstances of his death to record of Morton Eden's heir, Sir Frederick Eden. He was no more than sixteen when he was fatally wounded on active service in America when serving as Ensign in the 85th Regiment in the assault on New Orleans under Sir Edward Pakenham. Like his grandfather, he found his grave in American soil.

His brother William (1803–1873), who succeeded, brought new talents to the Eden line. He was a well-read man of artistic tastes, with some skill as an artist. Under him the two baronetcies of Maryland and West Auckland became combined. His son and heir, another Sir William, inheriting his artistic tendencies, developed characteristics that, as is shown in the chapter following, made him an eccentric.

In the complicated pattern of the character of Sir Anthony Eden it is not difficult to trace back the threads to his ancestral past and to mark the elements derived from his forbears. The contribution of those able Edens of Georgian times is plain to see. From them he derived his skill in the conduct of diplomatic affairs. From the Governor of Maryland he has inherited that easy courtesy and the charm that has assisted him in the conduct of negotiations. With Frederick Morton Eden, his great-grandfather, he shares a liberal-minded humanitarianism. From his grandfather and his father he has inherited his artistic interests and his sensitiveness. Underlying these later strata are the older virtues of his race, the basic strength of the fighting Edens. The Cavaliers and their forbears fought for their lands, for their King and for the cause. He, in his generation, fought for his King and his cause no less gallantly than they.

CHAPTER II

ETON—WAR—OXFORD

THE upbringing of Anthony Eden followed the course traditional in the family. Through the generations the record has been the same—Eton and Oxford. In his case there was the difference that a course in the trenches and the mud of the Flanders battlefields in the First World War separated school and college.

He was born in time to enjoy the privilege and delights of country house living in a style that has vanished with perukes and pigtails, and that can now be relived only in the reminiscences of the Victorians. He made his bow to history in a reference or two to Anthony in his father's letters—"I love you dearly, Anthony, too."

Sir William Eden's sons were fortunate in their childhood background—Windlestone, of spacious loveliness, with its flowers, its grassland and its trees, esteemed by its sons to be second to none in England. To the West the eye could glimpse the hills against the blue sky of England's backbone. From the East the winds came sweeping from the North Sea to add their invigorating freshness to the zest of life.

There was a disturbing quality about the father of Anthony and his three brothers. Sir William, 7th holder of the West Auckland baronetcy, was the eccentric of the Edens, an unpredictable despot, caustic of tongue, roused by the annoyances of life to demonstrations of fitful rage. He combined hereditary skill in the hunting field—the "best man to hounds in the North of England"—with a less usual talent for painting in water-colours and an artist's appreciation of the beautiful. It was Sir William's distinction to have come off best in a dispute with the waspish Whistler.

His character has been drawn in a little masterpiece of biography by his heir, whose filial affection has not caused him to tone down parental eccentricities. Sir William Eden was at war with himself, with his family, whom he terrorized, and with friends, whom he overpowered. A man of infinite variety and outstanding originality,

he was over-sensitive and over-excitable, intolerant of views not his own, intensely resentful of criticism, who came to find his only consolation from life in the genius of his own water-colours. He spoke and acted, says his son in a pregnant phrase, "under the perpetual pressure of internal combustion".

As a parent he had limitations imposed upon him by his temperament. His benevolence was not to be presumed on, and his sharp sayings were hurtful to childish sensitiveness. He had not the patience, says his son, to suffer the moods and tears of childhood. Whenever the holidays came round, he fled from home, unable to endure the paraphernalia of children.

It is not to be conceived that he would have been lost in admiration of the labours of his son, the Foreign Secretary, in the cause of the League of Nations. Sir William was a man of vigorous prejudices and high on the list was that "palace of peace at the Hague", for which he had a furious detestation. Through him, Anthony inherited his artistic leanings and sensitivity and his taste for gardening. The gardens at Windlestone were more prized than the nurseries.

From his father, too, he inherited an individuality of outlook and a passion for truth. "There is," Sir William said, "only one thing in life, and that is to run straight. Don't for God's sake play a double game." There are politicians who would set small store by Sir William's counsel, but for the Foreign Secretary-to-be, it was not the least valuable item in the Eden heritage.

On his mother's side, Anthony was descended from another family in which service to the state has been a tradition and a distinction. Lady Eden was a Grey. Her father, Sir William Grey, was Governor of Bengal, her grandfather Bishop of Hereford, and her great-grandfather the first Earl Grey, and brother of the Prime Minister of the Reform Bill of 1832. Sybil Frances Grey was a woman whose beauty threw her husband into ecstasies of delight.

Anthony was the fourth of her five children. He was devoted to her, the kindest of sons. "He never gave me a moment's trouble," she said in after years. "He was the quiet one." She recalled that even as a child he displayed a precocious interest in politics. The younger Pitt first showed his talents as a youth by improvising replies to speakers he heard in debate. Anthony Eden gave an indication of

his talent by naming the political associations of the towns through which he passed on his journeys by train.

In the years of what his father contemptuously termed "petticoat government", his education was begun by a German governess with a talent for teaching languages, her native German and French. When he was thirteen, he went South to Eton, following the footsteps of Edens for a couple of centuries or more, the forbears whose portraits on the walls of Windlestone had been a reminder to him in his childhood years of the achievements of the sons of his race.

Anthony Eden won no distinction in his school days. He is remembered by his House-master as a pleasant boy with a good brain. He was a Wet-bob, and had some success with the oar. In 1915, when he was eighteen, he left to go with others of his year straight into the Army.

What influence Eton exerted on the development of the man there is little to show. It has been said that he is not conspicuously Old Etonian. Certainly there is no expression in writings or speeches of that affection for the place to which some have confessed who have fallen under the spell binding them to their old school with ties of attachment, stronger, so they claim, than can be woven by Harrow, Winchester or Rugby.

Churchill has made his anniversary visits to Harrow. Eden has not responded to the yearly call of the Fourth of June that some Etonians can never ignore. As evidence of this, we are told by one Eton author of the incident in the Boer War—"A very trying day, sir!" said a keen young A.D.C. to his General, during a brisk scrap with the Boers. "Trying, my boy, I should think it is," said the Old Etonian fox-hunting Life Guardsman, who was also a General. "This is the first Fourth of June for thirty years that I have not been at Eton."

The Fourth of June, by happy chance, was marked for Lieutenant Eden by the Gazette announcing the conferment of his Military Cross. This intrusion of the war may have interfered with the working on him of Eton's spell. His final year at school was overshadowed by the fighting in Flanders. In the war's opening months, before 1914 was out, his eldest brother, John, had been killed on active service while serving in France with the 12th Lancers, and his second brother, Timothy (the present baronet),

had been interned, to spend two years in Ruhleben. His younger brother, William Nicholas, was to be killed as midshipman in the Battle of Jutland.

From 1915 to 1919, Anthony Eden is lost to sight, his identity submerged in the millions who fought against Germany and the Kaiser. Major Churchill's service in the trenches was made the subject of a diverting record by his adjutant, but Sir Winston was a celebrity before he went to France. There is no account of Lieutenant Eden's days in the King's Royal Rifle Corps. He served for some time in C Company, 21st (Service) Battalion, K.R.R.C. He fought in the Battle of Ypres, where he was gassed, and the "London Gazette" of June 4th, 1917, announced the conferment on him of the Military Cross. Captain Eden was made Staff Officer, and later, Brigade Major.

He returned from France, sharing in the detestation for war as a means of settling disputes between peoples. Later this was to give a direction to his work as Minister for Foreign Affairs. He was to identify himself in frequent speeches with the "lost generation", and his championship of the principles of the League of Nations sprang from his personal experience of the folly of modern war, the futility of the battle of men against machines. But, though he detested war, he came to appreciate the professional soldier, and to understand the workings of his mind.

The war over, he decided to complete his education academically and followed the family course to Oxford and to Christ Church. Again as at Eton, the war seems to have deprived him of drawing from the University all that Oxford has to give. He, and others of his age, could not offer in the book of life unmarked pages on which Oxford could leave her imprint. France and the trenches had made their mark on impressionable youth. The University received men matured in the experience of war. The Oxford of his years was a disturbed Oxford, crowded by the reception of veterans from the war mingling with the normal intake from the schools.

As was the case at Eton, he was in no way outstanding. He lived, for part of the time at any rate, in the Old Library block of buildings. He sat Final Schools in Oriental Languages, Persian and Arabic in Trinity Term 1922, and was awarded a First Class. He took his B.A. degree in Hilary Term 1923. Christ Church elected

him in 1941 to an honorary studentship, the equivalent of an Honorary Fellowship. He was not prominent in college life, and did not, curiously enough, take any part in the debates of the Oxford Union, in which he resembled another Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey.

The present Dean of Christ Church (Dean Lowe) states that the impression Anthony Eden made upon senior members was that of an already mature young man, rather retiring, who kept himself to himself, and went steadily about his business of mastering Persian and Arabic—very courteous and assured, always kind at putting censors and dons and such at their ease.

The recollection is shared by the Junior Censor of Christ Church of the early twenties, J. C. Masterman, now Provost of Worcester. He remembers a friendly, courteous, able man, whom it was always a pleasure to see. Eden did not take a leading part in any special college activities, but probably saw his career in front of him, and did not have much time to spare for other things at Oxford. "I remember talking with him and his brother one day about the very fine Lawrence portrait of William Eden, Lord Auckland, which hangs in Christ Church Hall. I have always thought of that picture as a good representation of Eden characteristics."

To his tutor, Dr. A. E. J. Rawlinson, now Bishop of Derby, I am indebted for the following exquisite account of how he was nominated as tutor for Anthony Eden:

> "It is quite true that in a very nominal sense I was Anthony Eden's tutor when he was at Christ Church. His decision to read Persian and Arabic meant that he would have to be taught out of college—none of the actual Christ Church staff of tutors had any knowledge of those tongues. The then Dean, J. B. Strong (afterwards Bishop successively of Ripon and Oxford), argued with characteristic whimsicality that the nearest thing to Oriental languages was Hebrew, and that the nearest thing to Hebrew was Theology—wherefore it was the Theological Tutor who must take charge of the supervision of Eden. On those strange grounds I became his nominal tutor. Once a term I invited him to lunch: once a term I and my wife were invited back. But I really knew very little of him and was able to do very little for him. He did what someone once described as

'a lot of surreptitious work' in the intervals of social life with his friends, and in the end was placed in the first class by the examiners in the Honours School of Oriental Languages. He must have worked very hard and conscientiously."

When Eden came up, Dr. Rawlinson did not consider him to stand out as being conspicuously above the average in ability and distinction. He was just a socially attractive and obviously capable ex-officer and Old Etonian. He had been educated at the nursery stage by a German governess who had made him already trilingual. He already had foreign politics in mind as a career, and thought the languages of the Middle East likely to be diplomatically useful and important. Once, a good many years later, he told me, Dr. Rawlinson adds, he regretted not having learned Russian, since, in discussion with Russian statesmen, he had to depend on interpreters, the reliability of whom he was not able to test.

Eden, clearly enough, was in no state of uncertainty about his career. Before he had finished his time at Oxford he had stood, unsuccessfully, for Parliament. A year later he secured election to the House of Commons.

CHAPTER III

THE PARLIAMENTARY NOVICE

ANTHONY EDEN began his Parliamentary career to the luck of a good start. No politician has made less effort to court publicity, but the limelight has followed him since he first invited the suffrages of the loyal electors of Warwick and Leamington.

It was for him a honeymoon election, his marriage taking place in the midst of the campaign. His candidature was backed by the publicity attracted by his opponent, the Socialist Countess to whom he was by marriage doubly related. Years of speaking in the House of Commons could not have gained for the young unknown of politics the advantages he received from the fact that he was opposed by the Countess of Warwick. In these days Countesses and Socialism have no longer the same appearance of incongruity. Lady Warwick had been a worker in the Socialist cause for twenty years. Her adoption as candidate by the local Labour Party was made the more startling to the electors by her relationship by marriage with the young Tory nominee.

It was the appointment of Sir Ernest Pollock (Lord Hanworth) as Master of the Rolls in October 1923 that gave Anthony Eden his chance in the Warwick and Leamington Division. Sir Ernest had represented the seat as Conservative member since 1910, and the news of his elevation to the Bench caught the three parties unprepared. The Conservatives had no man in the offing, but by October 18th the divisional executive had decided to invite Captain Robert Anthony Eden, M.C., to address a meeting at Leamington with a view to his adoption.

It was not without hesitation that the decision had been reached to issue the invitation to a young man of twenty-six, whose principal recommendations were youth, good looks and good family. Older Conservatives remembered that Warwick had been represented by men of such eminence as Speaker Peel and Alfred Lyttelton? Gladstone's brother-in-law.

It was the late Lord Willoughby de Broke, the local chairman, who had put forward Eden's name. His backing carried the

day. When it was said that "Eden is so young", his sponsor brushed the objection aside. "Young be damned—he's got brains and has set his mind on a Parliamentary career. I predict for him a brilliant future." Anthony himself undertook, if elected, to correct, in due course, the handicap of youth.

At the General Election of 1922, Eden had unsuccessfully stood as Conservative for the Spennymoor Division of Durham. He was opposed by Labour and Liberal candidates, and secured second place with 7,576 votes. His first failure had not deterred him, nor was it a deterrent for his sponsors in Warwick and Leamington.

With characteristic modesty, he told his adoption meeting that, unfortunately, he lacked the advantage of long political service or political knowledge and the eloquence and wisdom born of years, but he did claim an unbounded enthusiasm for the cause. He had been born and bred in the Conservative tradition and he believed there was no political creed more worthy of a life of service.

He was engaged to Beatrice Beckett, daughter of Sir Gervase Beckett, the banker. The wedding was fixed for November 5th, and the candidate broke off his campaign to go South for the ceremony at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Two days for the honeymoon in Sussex, and he was back in the constituency, with the aura of romance to add to his already considerable pull with the women voters.

The ties of marriage had involved him in complicated relationships with the titled bearer of the red flag of Socialism. Lady Warwick was mother-in-law of his sister, Elfrida, wife of Lord Brooke, heir to the Warwick Earldom. By his own marriage, Captain Eden had as wife a woman who was at the same time step-daughter and niece of Lady Warwick's elder daughter, Lady Marjorie Beckett. These complications completed the diversions of a domestic interlude in politics. Lady Warwick did not carry her family with her in her Socialist adventure. Lord Brooke sent his brother-in-law a note of support: "As you know, I am not a particular partisan of any party, but on this occasion I am heartily with you in your endeavour." The Hon. Louis Greville gave similar assurances.

As the contest was nearing the end, polling was deferred by the dissolution of Parliament. Stanley Baldwin, recently become Prime Minister in succession to Bonar Law, had decided on a

general election, and the Warwick and Leamington campaign had to be begun again from the beginning. Baldwin had gone to the country to obtain a mandate for imposing tariffs, and Captain Eden found that his Liberal opponent had gained the advantages of the old rallying cries of Free Trade. The Liberal colours were borne by a Mr. George Nicholls, who received much less of the limelight than the Countess, but who had the satisfaction of polling nearly three times as many votes.

The outcome of the contest was a problem for the prophets. Sir Ernest Pollock had been returned unopposed since 1910, and there was the unknown quantity of the women's vote—18,000 women electors, and scarcely a clue as to which way their choice would fall. Here, it was thought, the young Captain, undeniably good-looking and impeccably dressed, would have the advantage.

The campaign had exhausted the interest of the electorate in the two months to which it was prolonged. It ended in an anti-climax, with no more than 200 persons gathered outside the old Shire Hall to hear the result and raise a mild cheer at Eden's success. He was returned with 16,000 votes, that just exceeded the combined total of his Liberal and Socialist opponents. Lady Warwick had found no more than 4,000 supporters.

So it befell that at the age of twenty-six Captain Anthony Eden, M.C., went to Westminster to represent the electors of Warwick and Leamington. It was also his privilege to do duty for the electors of Stratford-upon-Avon, and those with a taste for the Shakesperian quotation found phrases to greet "this other Eden".

The General Election in which young Eden was first returned to Parliament had ended with less satisfaction for his leader. The Conservatives were in a minority to combined Labour and Liberal forces. Stanley Baldwin resigned, and Ramsay MacDonald reigned in his stead.

There have been great parliamentary figures who have made a name for themselves on first rising to address the House of Commons. No presage of fame marked Eden's début. He had sat in his place on the Opposition benches for less than a month before he rose to catch the Speaker's eye. He chose for the occasion a debate on the air defence of Britain, some prophetic sense guiding his choice. Defending Britain from the danger of the marauding

bomber was to become a problem that was greatly to exercise his mind in the future. In 1924 it was already beginning to be a matter for concern amongst the Conservatives. Ramsay MacDonald, pacifist leader in the first war, and his party, were not sound on military matters, and on February 19, 1924, Samuel Hoare (Lord Templewood) moved a motion recommending that it was imperative to maintain an air defence force of sufficient strength to give adequate defence against attack by the strongest air force within striking distance of our shores.

The Government spokesman, resisting the motion, favoured the opinion that preparedness was not a good weapon of defence. It provided an easy opening for the young Member. Preparedness, retorted Eden, might not be a good weapon, but unpreparedness was a very much worse one.

"It is a natural temptation for members opposite," Eden went on, "whose views on defence were fairly well known during the years of the war, to adopt the attitude of that very useful animal the terrier, and roll on their backs and wave their paws in the air with a pathetic expression. That is not the line by which we can insure this country against attack from the air."

It was a neat little speech, adequate for the occasion of introducing the member for Warwick to his fellow members. He had begun his career as parliamentary speaker in a pleasantly effective fashion. Except that it was his maiden effort, it would scarcely be remembered among the scores of speeches he has made since. Air defence was scarcely a burning question in the middle Twenties. A dozen years later, in more dangerous days, he could have recalled that he had devoted his first speech in the House to urging upon the Socialists the necessity for defending Britain against the greatest peril of modern war. In the Thirties he was to serve in Governments not conspicuously successful in applying the advice he had given in his maiden speech.

He spoke again on air defence a few weeks later, without making any striking contribution to the discussion. Then in April he joined in a Foreign Affairs debate. The subject was Turkey, and he was heard to much better effect in a simple but effective plea for the cultivation of friendship with the new Turkey that was evolving under Kemal Ataturk. He also intervened to raise a point about the affairs of Persia. His speeches, on subjects on which he had personal

knowledge, were delivered with an assurance of manner unusual in so young a member.

The life of his first Parliament was too short for him to make a name for himself. Having submitted to the humiliations of minority government for little more than half a year, MacDonald decided to invite the electors to give him power as well as office. They refused him either. In the 1924 election, the Red Letter Election, opinion ran decisively against the Socialists. The member for Warwick and Leamington had no difficulty in securing re-election. He returned to Westminster as one of the 400 members supporting the second administration of Stanley Baldwin.

Anthony Eden completed his parliamentary apprenticeship in the 1924 Parliament. It was a parliament that began with crises on coal, rose to its climax with the General Strike, and faded out in the atmosphere of tranquillity. Baldwin was the dominating figure, Baldwin of the first phase, the man who worked to restore the quality of British politics, and who set himself to quell the clamour of class war. He set the tone in that most moving of his speeches appealing for industrial peace that ended with the re-echoing of the ancient prayer, "Give peace in our time, O Lord."

On no mind did the Baldwin message make a deeper impression than on Anthony Eden. The idealist in him was stirred by the restatement of the Tory creed that placed the emphasis on the things of permanent worth, rising above the cries of party—freedom of speech, liberty of conscience, the amity of the classes under democracy. There are turns of thought and of phrase in the later-day speeches of Anthony Eden that can be traced back to the speeches Baldwin made during the 1924 Parliament.

Eden began his novitiate as Parliamentary Private Secretary attached to the Home Office team. The Under-Secretary was Godfrey Locker-Lampson, who took the young man under his wing. The Minister was Sir William Joynson Hicks—"Jix" to his friends and the cartoonists, the jaunty figure in a frock-coat, breezy and boisterous, leader of the Evangelical laity of the Church of England, zealous watch dog against the machinations of the "Bolshies". "Jix" was an admirable example to study in the conduct of parliamentary affairs, a party pugilist who, by his good temper and easy manner, commended himself to the House.

The Parliamentary Private Secretary is no great figure at

Westminster. He represents the lowest form of ministerial existence in the chrysalis stage. He holds an appointment under his chief without profit or prestige. He gains no voice in the conduct of the affairs of the minister to whom he is attached. He accepts some sacrifice of independence of action and freedom of speech. Many men have risen to eminence without passing through this stage of novitiate. None the less, young aspirants to political advancement covet the humble accolade of the P.P.S.

In the summer of 1925 young Eden found a change from his attendance at Westminster in a trip across the world. Through his father-in-law's influence, he was appointed representative of the "Yorkshire Post" to attend the Imperial Press Conference held in Melbourne. He made use of the occasion to gain acquaintance with the people who live in lands whose place on the map used to be coloured red for British Empire. He travelled by way of Canada and the Pacific to New Zealand and Australia. On the way home he made a short call at Ceylon.

His impressions furnished matter for a series of articles that appeared in the "Yorkshire Post", and these in turn provided material for a book, "Place in the Sun", that appeared in 1926 with a commendatory foreword from the Prime Minister. "Captain Eden," Baldwin wrote, "has set a good example, not only in having taken advantage of the opportunity afforded of seeing so much of the Empire, but also in having so fully recorded his impressions. If his articles should lead others to follow that example, he will, I know, feel richly rewarded."

Readers of the book may also feel slightly puzzled over the author of those dispatches. They are made up of guide-book information, some reflections neither original nor startling, on such imperial subjects as emigration and tariffs, with an occasional paragraph that brings the scene he is describing quite vividly to life. The reader concludes that Captain Eden was stirred into originality only through his artistic sense, for it is invariably the scene and its colourings that charge his pen.

Thus he sailed the broad waters of the St. Lawrence, approaching Quebec through a mist. The ship glided over the glassy surface of the river and Eden was conscious of "a silence in which thought travels slowly". As he crossed the prosperous farmlands of the Dominion he looked upward and realized that he was in a "country

of painters' skies—skies to make a painter's palate itch". At twilight a haze descended over the prairie, mellowing in its hues, and the setting sun "slashes the sky with orange and with gold".

From Vancouver he set out on the twenty days' voyage south across the Pacific—a "lovely" sea and a "silken" sea, most wonderful at sunset when for short minutes the sky is aflame with rainbow glory. A few hours he passed at Honolulu amongst the islands of flowers—"the golden shower, true to its name, the scarlet poinciana dripping red blood, the hibiscus in all colours and all shades, and the royal palm".

In New Zealand he was suitably impressed by the imperial aspect of affairs, but it was the beauty of the scenes that moved him, and he has an anecdote to pass on, one of the few stories in the Eden saga: "An English visitor found himself seated next to a distinguished Maori at a public function. In the course of conversation the Maori remarked, 'You may be surprised to hear that I have Scottish blood in my veins.' 'I am indeed,' replied the Englishman. 'Well, as a matter of fact, my grandfather had a Scottish Wesleyan missionary for dinner.' "

Over the beauty of Sydney Harbour Eden became eloquent, and over the charm lurking in its innumerable coves and beaches—"as a honeymoon harbour it is unequalled". The train journey to the Blue Mountains took him through the great expanse of Australian bush—"wide valleys wrapped in a blue haze, the blue and green and silver of the gum trees". After these glimpses the reader finds it incongruous to read trite passages on the sheep—"shearers are paid by results and some of them make very good money".

Arrived at Adelaide, Eden noted the Zoological Gardens—"Zoos yield only to racecourses in pride of public estimation in Australia. If there is a racecourse to every ten Australians, there is a zoo to every twenty." Then he was off once more on an excursion in colour:

> As the night draws on twilight lingers after sunset; the graceful stems, the tufted tops of the tall gum trees, a dark blue-green against a cloudless sky, a clear and brilliant evening light, the grey-green saltbush, a lighter undergrowth, opal tints above the sky line—long ago in Lombardy.
>
> The day is spent and a halt at a wayside station, Karonie perhaps.

The evening is hot and close, but still and beautiful through the carriage window. Through the night comes clearly the swaying jangle of a bell, a sound that has but one interpretation. Peering into the evening night in the bush we see at a little distance a cloud of dust and hear the familiar shamble of a hundred feet. As our eyes grow accustomed to the gloom, the camels themselves are visible, the long shuffling string, grunting and swaying.

And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand.

Embedded in the pages of this book are touches like these that give a hint of the existence of an Anthony Eden rarely exposed to the public view. Through the arid wastes of Hansard you may look in vain for glimpses of the artistic Eden tantalizingly glimpsed in these despatches of travel, the Eden unknown to weighty platitudes of Foreign Office pronouncements, who has an artistic sensitivity to colour and beauty and an author's delight in the turn of a phrase.

It was a distinction for the young M.P. to have a book to his credit, a book backed by the recommendation of the Prime Minister. They began to speak of young Eden as Baldwin's protégé.

Eden continued in his second Parliament as he had begun in the first. He had no reluctance to join in the debates, but he intervened when he could contribute something drawn from his own personal knowledge.

The speeches of M.P.s during their 'prentice years are not often worthy of later study. Eden's contribution to the debate on Irak's frontiers in December 1925 has an interest for his admirers. It showed his advance as parliamentary speaker. There is disclosed, even in the printed page, an ease and facility that was previously lacking. It is of interest, too, for establishing the speaker, even at that early stage in his career, as a League of Nations man.

The occasion was well chosen. Irak and Turkey were subjects on which Eden could speak with the backing of knowledge. It was a debate that had been opened by the Prime Minister, who was seeking the approval of the House for the boundaries for the new Arab state that had been created in Mesopotamia, and for the continuance of the British protection under which it had been placed. Eden's contribution was not one that turned the views

of an adverse House of Commons—the Government's majority was never in doubt—but his remarks were of the temper to commend the speaker to Stanley Baldwin.

Advocating the continuance of British protection for the young Arab kingdom, Eden said that we had placed the country with its forelegs in one civilization and its hind legs in another. For us to scuttle, at that stage, like flying curs frightened at the sight of our own shadow, would do vast damage to British prestige in the Orient. Our name would be a jibe in the mouth of every tavern-lounger from Marrakesh to Singapore. But while the Government should stand by Irak they should extend the hand of friendship and conciliation to Turkey, so that we might retain the goodwill of the Turkish Republic.

In his final passage, Eden tilted at the Press Lords, Beaverbrook and Rothermere, who were in favour of scuttling out of the Middle East on the ground of expense. The Russians, then as now, ready to stir up trouble, had been counselling the Turks against acceptance of Irak's frontiers.

"There," said Anthony Eden, "is indeed an unholy alliance, a marriage bed upon which even the most hardened of us must blush to look, and we may well wonder how far this alliance is to go. Are we to see Bolsheviks perusing the columns of the 'Daily Express', and noble Lords bustling into Fleet Street in Russian boots?"

The speech confirmed the good impression that had been made by the member for Warwick, and it led to his first contact with the department in which he established his reputation. His bent towards foreign affairs was already clearly marked, and he was invited to transfer himself from the Home Office to the Foreign Office as P.P.S. to Sir Austen Chamberlain.

There is no disposition to mark Austen Chamberlain among the great Foreign Secretaries. The aura has long since vanished from Locarno, but in 1926 he stood at the mid-summer of his success. Europe had acclaimed him as the negotiator of treaties that were thought to have laid the foundations for Europe's peace.

Here, again, Eden was fortunate in his mentor. Austen was a Conservative who brought to politics the traditions of the old school. He had inherited little of the political force of his father, the turbulent Radical from Birmingham, who ended his career as the great Imperialist. On two occasions Austen's high sense of honour

At Nawton Tower in 1938 *with Mrs. Eden and in* 1951 *with his younger son, Nicholas, who had just completed his service in his father's old Corps. His elder son, Simon, was killed on active service as pilot-officer in Burma in* 1945

THE PUBLIC SPEAKER

Above, before the Conservative Party Conference at Brighton, and, below, two wartime pictures. From the sandbag-fronted platform he was addressing Indian troops at Cairo

robbed him of succession to the leadership of the Conservative Party and the Premiership that was the summit of his life's ambition. At the last he had the satisfaction of seeing the ultimate honour that had eluded him fall upon his father's younger son, Neville, his half-brother.

A fine estimate of Chamberlain's character is presented by Leo Amery, who wrote of his old colleague: "He was one of those men —the very backbone of England—who, born and bred in the tradition of public service, have given their lives to the faithful fulfilment of their duty as it came to them, and to the maintenance of the standards they set before themselves. . . . His weakness as a politician was an exaggerated sensitiveness to the idea of being thought self-seeking or disloyal." You would not be going far wrong were you to transfer this estimate from Austen to Anthony Eden. To it Amery adds that Chamberlain's achievement at Locarno was "mainly due to his patience and tact and to that 'plain good intent' which Burke rated above all other qualities". Here again, the words may be transferred from the old Minister to his successor. Those same qualities of tact and patience, with his own charm in personal contacts, grew to promote and distinguish Eden's work as Foreign Secretary.

During the years of his novitiate Eden was the close observer of Austen Chamberlain's patient efforts to find a line of policy that would satisfy German aspirations, and at the same time remove French anxieties. French fears were then fixed on the future—that time, ten years ahead, when by virtue of population German soldiers must inevitably outnumber the French. "I look forward," said one French Premier, "with terror." When the term of years had passed it was Eden who was to be faced with the actuality of France's worst apprehensions realized—a Germany re-armed and aggressive, bent on reversing the Allied victory in 1918.

In the Twenties, Austen could sympathize with France's desire for security and for assurances of British assistance in case of need. But to meet French desires he could not go beyond the limits set by British opinion that was beginning to flow against the French. Feeling was turning from the Ally by whose side we had fought and sympathy was growing for the enemy the Allies had defeated.

There were suspicions against France. Against these young Mr. Eden might protest, but he would not be able to remove them.

Looking back over Anglo-French relations in the ten years that followed 1918, he was driven to one firm conclusion: "On every occasion when the outlook for peace in Europe has been the least happy, it has been the occasion when our relations with France have been the least happy."

Had this conclusion formed the basis of British policy in the ten years after 1928, the course of world history would have been different. But then the Pacts of Locarno marked the limit of what British opinion would permit—pacts involving guarantees to Germany as well as France of aid in the case of unprovoked aggression. At the time this seemed adequate against any foreseeable eventualities. With French aspirations thus met, and Germany restored to the comity of Europe as a member of the League, Sir Austen, with his Parliamentary Private Secretary, had ground for crediting that the people of Europe could go about their business in a Continent free from tension. But, even as the signatures had been affixed to the Pacts of Locarno, the gates of Landsberg Fortress were opened to restore a prisoner to freedom. The ravens should have croaked on the battlements that day. Hitler had been set at liberty.

Tranquillity went out with the 1929 election, both at home and abroad. Ramsay MacDonald formed his second minority Government of Socialists. The world economic blizzard ushered in the anxious Thirties.

In the 1929 election, when the Tories fared badly, Anthony Eden had no particular difficulty in holding Warwick and Leamington. He had consolidated his position in the constituency, following the usual routine. With his wife, he attended Primrose League whist drives and dances, Junior Imperial League functions and the summer round of garden parties and fêtes. His constituents had been gratified to follow his progress at Westminster and to hear the good opinions expressed about him. Thus T. P. O'Connor, Father of the House—"I heard an excellent speech from a young fellow named Eden—member for the Warwick and Leamington division; he will go far." Warwick and Leamington shared their member's pride.

In those days, electioneering for Eden meant a tiring round of speeches in the scattered villages of South Warwickshire, for the division then included Stratford-upon-Avon and district, as well

as Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth. He now recalls those early days as something of a desperate attempt to rally rural support, and he has been heard to refer to that meeting at such and such a village "in the wilds of Warwickshire where the audience one night consisted of only the chairman and two reporters from local papers". It is doubtful if the attendance was ever as bad as that, but it is characteristic of him that he should have suggested that there was a time when he could not attract even a village audience.

CHAPTER IV

JUNIOR MINISTER

IN August 1931 the first National Government was formed by Ramsay MacDonald and Anthony Eden found a place in it as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. It was the beginning of a connection with the Foreign Office that continued, in a succession of appointments, until he resigned the office of Foreign Secretary seven years later. By that time, the unknown junior minister was a European figure, champion of the League of Nations and protagonist at Geneva with Mussolini and Hitler.

The world trade depression had called the National Government into being. When Britain was faced with bankruptcy, members of the Labour Government had not been prepared to impose the cuts that had been recommended in national expenditure. MacDonald resigned office, and was reappointed as head of a government supported by Conservatives, Liberals and a handful of Labour members. Elder statesmen were called upon to take office to give the prestige of their names to an administration that was to take unpopular measures to restore our national credit.

To the Foreign Office went the Marquess of Reading, the ex-cabin boy, who had advanced by way of the law and the Lord Chief Justiceship to the Viceroyalty of India. As his Under-Secretary there served the member for Warwick and Leamington.

Eden's appointment was carried out in this manner. The names of a number of candidates considered to be suitable for the post were put down on a sheet of paper. This was placed before the Marquess to choose one from among them as his junior. It is something after this fashion that Sheriffs are selected at the annual ceremony of pricking with the bodkin. Much more than the under-secretaryship hung in the balance as Lord Reading hesitated over the names. His choice fell upon Anthony Eden.

Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs—it was a distinction for a young M.P. with no more than eight years' membership of the House. There were many who envied him, and some who thought they had better claims to the post. He was not merely junior

minister of the Crown, but his chief was a member of the Upper House, so that his was the responsibility to speak for the department in the Commons.

The immediate concern of those days was not foreign affairs, but economics and saving money. These were matters for other Ministries, but they were to have a powerful influence on the problems that Eden was to be called upon to face.

Britain had been badly shaken by the money crisis. The flight from the £ had placed Britain's credit in danger. The world was losing confidence in our ability to pay for what we were buying. The alarm caused by those crisis days persisted long after the emergency had passed. Cuts in the salaries of state servants, cuts in the dole for the workless, estimates pruned here, economies made there in the great spending departments. Nations on the Continent might be re-arming, expanding their air forces, buying guns instead of butter. Britain was otherwise engaged. Meanwhile, across the Channel, Hitler, with his Brownshirts, was bludgeoning his way to power.

When the emergency programme had provided immediate relief, a General Election was held. The National Government needed the nation's mandate to continue the job of setting the country's financial house in order. There was uncertainty as to the outcome. Rigid economy and cuts do not form an appealing programme, but it is never the hard task that depresses the British elector. Eden was engaged by one opponent, C. G. Garton, the Labour nominee, and he was given a thumping majority—38,584 votes in his favour, 29,323 over the Socialist.

He made a triumphal appearance at the window of the Conservative Club to say: "I think this is the best day's work for England we have ever done. Those who think England down and out will have to revise their opinions. We in England have the best political instinct of any race, and to-day we have shown that we know what to do in a crisis."

Back at Westminster Eden soon found himself provided with a new chief. Sir John Simon brought to the Foreign Office the advantage of a reputation then at its peak for ability and statesmanship. It was fifteen years since he had held office. He, like Churchill, had been a member of Asquith's Government, that almost legendary administration, the best equipped in brains since the Ministry of

All the Talents. Since the death of Birkenhead—F. E. Smith was his contemporary at Oxford—he was acknowledged to have the best legal brain of his day. He had won new distinction as chairman of the Commission that had recently reported on the future of the Government of India. His appointment to the Foreign Office was widely praised, but he was to establish that incomparable talents in speaking to a brief are not enough to turn a lawyer into a Minister for Foreign Affairs. He conducted international cases, rather than foreign policy. As a man he suffered the handicap of lacking the genial glow of humanity. Of one of his most effective speeches, Winterton remarked that it was brilliant but "coldly chiselled". That was Simon, a man of ability and brains, but coldly chiselled.

For a young Minister at the outset of his career, Simon was one from whom there was much to be learned. He brought to his work the clearest understanding. Nothing was too complex for him to grasp and to explain in addresses that were a model of lucidity. The difficulty, sometimes, as one listened to his exposition of both sides of a case, was to determine to which of so judicially balanced arguments his own opinion swung. Baldwin was driven to remark that the F.O. seemed to be pursuing two policies—one pro-French and one pro-German. Baldwin would have preferred less marshalling of confusing arguments and greater certainty in conclusions.

When Simon took over the Foreign Office, the days of the Locarno era were running out. Meditating on the uneasy state of Europe, Anthony Eden was very conscious that the hopes of Locarno had not fructified. For why? It might be that the seekers after peace had been neglectful of essentials.

He made an analysis of affairs for the benefit of members of the Rhodes Trust assembled for dinner in 1932. While one-half of Europe had been dominated by apprehension (the French) and the other by impatience (Germany and Italy) there had been the tendency to pay too much attention to the mechanics of peace and too little to its fundamentals.

"There is," he pronounced, "no real substitute for understanding. When nations drift apart it is of no use to construct elaborate machinery for which there is no immediate call. Indeed, that machinery may get in the way. You cannot make peace by machinery. In the last resort it is the spirit, not the mechanics, that count. As I have watched some of those ingenious contrivances that have

occupied the minds of international statesmen for too long, while the more sinister spirits of a selfish nationalism and an outworn jingoism were gaining influence in the background, I have been made sad by their futility. As well use a mouse-trap to catch a goblin."

Not many months were to pass before the mouse-traps were out at Geneva and he was to be given a demonstration of the soundness of his metaphor.

Later that year (1932) Eden began his regular attendances at Geneva as substitute British delegate at the Disarmament Conference. It was a duty that might have confirmed him in his disparagement of international efforts towards peace-making when the fundamental of good intention was not universal among the participants.

All the trumpets of rhetoric had blared at the opening of the Disarmament Conference in February 1932, but as a contribution to disarmament the long-drawn-out discussions that followed were fruitless. Three of the participants had not intended to disarm. The Germans, claiming equality of rights with the other powers, had already begun to move towards equality in arms, in despite of the Treaty of Versailles. The French sheltered themselves behind the phrase equality of rights in a régime of security, and security for a Frenchman meant strength in arms. In Italy there had been bellicose noises for some time past, and Mussolini had need for arms to carry out plans that were maturing in his mind.

For a while the difficulties acted as a spur for the delegates. Germany withdrew from the Conference as a protest against a position of inferiority. A way must be found to bring the Germans back. There were earnest discussions, proposals and counter-proposals. Eden was engaged with the world's diplomats in efforts to find a compromise.

The French put forward a scheme. Whatever its effect on armaments, it would have ensured security for France. Britain would have been committed, automatically, to take part in a war against a declared aggressor and to place her Navy at the disposal of the League of Nations. The British Government were not prepared to commit themselves thus far. Eden announced the rejection of the French scheme.

"My Government," he said, "considers that in its membership

of the League and its signature of the Locarno Treaties it has gone as far as it could, and should, in assuming definite commitments in Europe. I believe the public opinion of my country is unalterably opposed to Britain undertaking new obligations."

The search for a compromise continued. Ramsay MacDonald arrived at Geneva in person with a new scheme in his pocket. The arrival of the British Prime Minister, attended by the Foreign Secretary, caused a flurry of interest. He unfolded a plan complete with concrete figures. It allotted arms and effectives according to the importance and population of states—200,000 men for Germany, France and Italy, 500,000 men for Russia.

Eden was left to take charge of the British Draft Convention. He met Herr Nadolny, who voiced German objections. He called on M. Massigli, who proposed French amendments. He went home to report and returned to resume his round of calls at Geneva. The Germans stood out for recognition of equality of rights. Eden could promise no sympathy for the Germans unless they were prepared not to re-arm. Disarmament, he said, was to be achieved down to the German level.

The interminable discussions continued. Disarmament might be brought no nearer, but the young Minister was learning the business of diplomacy in the best school, gaining an experience from contact with such men as Paul Boncour, Baron von Neurath, Chancellor Dollfus, the pocket dictator, Baron Aloisi, Dr. Benes, M. Titulesco and the United States observer, Norman Davis. Eden became at home at Geneva. He was, at this period, spending more time in his Victorian sitting-room in the Hôtel beau Rivage than in his study in London.

Hitler came to power. The negotiations at Geneva went on fitfully, while in Germany the Nazi Revolution proceeded with gathering momentum. So too did German rearmament. The proceedings at Geneva became a nullity. The Japanese, censured for aggression in Manchuria, left the League of Nations. Hitler, a few months later, followed them out.

As Anthony Eden cast his eyes over Europe at the close of 1933, he could not but note that doubting, questioning glances were being flung across frontiers. The atmosphere was a breeding-ground of suspicion. There was need for cool judgment, for scaremongers were the satellites of war.

What now was to be done about the machinery, in particular the machinery for the collective settlement of disputes known as the League of Nations? Should it be scrapped?

Giving his answer to this question to a League of Nations meeting, he said, "No, a thousand times No." What was needed for the recovery of confidence in Europe was the removal of the causes of uneasiness. There had recently come from Berlin declarations of peaceful intent; they were to be welcomed. But there were disturbing evidences in Germany, the removal of which would do more to reassure the rest of Europe than any number of speeches.

Eden closed his address with some thoughts about war and a prophecy. "There is perhaps a special responsibility and a special opportunity for us who belong to the generation that served in the late war, and who are still of military age. The present leaders in Germany belong, many of them, to that generation. It is not only that we who have seen war are the last to wish it to recur, but it is with the individual experience we have each of us had we appreciate only too clearly that a future war must begin where the last war closed. If the Great War was a struggle in man-power the next war will be a test of the endurance of the civilian population." It was a discouraging thought.

CHAPTER V

LORD PRIVY SEAL

IN 1934 Eden was given increased authority by promotion to full Ministerial rank, though not of Cabinet status, as Lord Privy Seal. This office, free of departmental duties, leaves the holder at liberty to undertake any special work that may be required and he was seconded to the Foreign Office.

It had long been recognized that the work of the Foreign Secretary involved burdens scarcely to be undertaken by a single minister. Balfour had found that the press of affairs was too great for a single man to bear. Since his day, discussions at Geneva, requiring the Minister's frequent presence, had added vastly to the work. On these grounds alone Eden's appointment could have been justified, but that was not the sole reason that lay behind it.

Already there were murmurings about the inadequacy of Simon. The Socialists were critical of his handling of affairs, which would have been of lesser consequence had not Socialists' criticisms been matters for Conservative misgiving. On both sides of the House Eden had won approval. Inside the Department the permanent officials had come to respect him for his application to his work and his statesmanlike approach. The Lord Privy Seal's promotion was generally and warmly welcomed.

His first assignment was a mission to Paris, Berlin and Rome. One further effort was to be made to save the moribund Disarmament Conference.

He set out on his travels in February, and stopped at Berlin for his first meeting with Hitler (February 21). It was in the early days of the régime and the personality of the Fuehrer had not yet bloomed in the fullness of its arrogance. He showed himself to be conciliatory, prepared to agree in principle to the MacDonald plan. Naturally enough, any proposal was acceptable to him that would accord Germany a permitted army of double the total allowed under the limitations of the Peace Treaty. As to aeroplanes, Hitler was not prepared to exclude them as weapons of war. He asked for

fighter 'planes for defence; bombers, he asserted, Germany did not require. Hitler offered to conclude a ten years' convention limiting the German air force during that period to 50 per cent of the French air force, with a German army on a parity with a French army of 300,000 men.

In Rome, five days later, Eden met Mussolini, who counselled acceptance of the Fuehrer's terms. At his final call in Paris, Eden could make little headway. The French were courteous but firm. A country that had been ravaged twice within one generation could not agree to any disarmament without effective guarantees. Disarmament? The Germans had been re-arming for years, even before Hitler had come to power, in defiance of Versailles.

Eden might repeat what the Fuehrer had told him that Röhm's Storm Troops and the Nazi Brownshirts, three million strong, were no army. It might be so. Nevertheless, German rearmament was a fact that no French government could ignore.

The first Eden mission had produced no results, except that he had established contact with the dictators and taken something of their measure. He did not permit himself to be discouraged. The work for international co-operation must continue. What, meanwhile, should be Britain's policy? There were pacifists and idealists of the Left who called on Britain to disarm whatever the rest of the world might do. This was a folly that the Lord Privy Seal denounced in public speech.

He gave his views on arms and realities to an Armistice Day meeting at Stratford-on-Avon. An unarmed Britain in an armed world, he said, would place us in a dangerous position. It would also deprive our representatives of much of their negotiating power in the councils of the nations. Our weakness would be a temptation to the predatory instincts of others.

In Britain we believed in collective security based on the League of Nations. But not all nations belonged to the League, nor could they all, Germany being one, be counted upon to work the collective system. If we disarmed while others re-armed, collective security could not be made effective and the system would be a snare and a delusion. While we pursued our own ideals we must pay heed to realities. When political conditions in Europe were disturbed a strong Britain was a stabilizing element, but a weak Britain would be an invitation to conflict. So, while supporting the

League and collective peace, we had reason to look to the needs of our own defence.

It was an accurate enough analysis of the situation. It was to be repeated by scores of commentators thereafter. The terms would be more emphatic but the essential facts had been stated. Events abroad during 1934, Hitler's second year of power, underlined the warning.

Following the course events took twenty years ago, we must not make the mistake of attributing the knowledge we have about Hitler and Mussolini to the statesmen of Europe who had to deal with them. Looking back now, we can mark each step in Hitler's progress. But the Hitler of 1934 and his purposes were comparatively unknown outside the circle of his intimate associates. The Fuehrer and his Nazis could then pass for German patriots whose perfervid nationalism aimed at nothing more sinister than the restoration of Germany to her former place amongst the powers. The British people had long since lost any hatred they felt for their former foe. As Eden said, we have never been good haters. At home sympathy for the Germans mounted and for the French declined. The French were coming to be reckoned as tedious in their suspicions and their intransigence. There was support for Germany's legitimate aspirations—it was postulated that they were legitimate.

Some insight into the nature of Hitler and his Nazis was given by the Night of Knives of June 30, 1934. Alleging that a conspiracy was on foot to depose him, Hitler rounded up associates whom he did not trust. They were hurried away to immediate execution. Röhm was arrested by Hitler himself, to be shot forthwith. Goering ordered the shooting of the former Chancellor, General von Schleicher and his wife, and of Gregor Strasser. The blood bath in Berlin continued throughout the night, as man after man was lined up before the execution squad.

The shock of the purge had scarcely passed before a new Nazi-inspired terror was staged in Vienna. Rebels invaded the Government buildings and shot the pocket dictator, Dollfuss. Government buildings were seized, ministers held as hostages and the overthrow of the Ministry announced by radio. The revolt failed, but days of uneasiness followed until Mussolini sent three Italian divisions to the Austrian frontier. Hitler publicly dissociated himself and his

Nazis from the rising, but only the credulous accepted his denial of complicity.

These were danger signals for Germany's neighbours, indications of the gangster nature and methods of the new masters of Germany. Tension in Europe mounted. French opinion hardened against disarmament and looked for allies on Germany's eastern frontiers. The British Government grew concerned over national defence. Baldwin discovered that our frontier was no longer the white cliffs of Dover, but the Rhine.

That autumn the Lord Privy Seal found relief from the troubles of the Continent in the calmer atmosphere of Scandinavia. He visited in turn Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen. To a Swedish audience he discoursed on Britain's pacific purpose. "We are a nation of traders and trade needs peace, but sentiment is deeper than that." By that time, Britain's pacific intentions needed no commendation. It was the one factor in the European situation that could be relied upon.

Eden was emerging as one of Europe's younger statesmen. That winter there were problems for Geneva. Disorders in the Saar were the cause of concern. That territory was still divorced from Germany, governed by a League Commission. A plebiscite was to determine its future. To assist the population towards a decision the Nazis were employing the method known as peaceful persuasion, in which persuasiveness is a euphemism and peace less than that. Were the situation to get entirely out of hand, the French might send troops into the Saar as, a few years earlier, they had marched into the Ruhr. Simon suggested an Anglo-Italian force to keep the peace, but objections were raised. Eden, from Geneva, recommended an international force, a proposal backed in the Cabinet by Neville Chamberlain, that won the Government's approval. The Lord Privy Seal had the satisfaction of carrying the League Council in its favour. Shortly afterwards British troops, with sticks instead of rifles, were to be seen on duty as part of the international patrol. Order was maintained, and the Saarlanders eventually voted for returning to Germany.

Another problem for Geneva arose from the Marseilles murders. In October, Alexander, King of Jugoslavia, together with the French Foreign Minister, Louis Barthou, was shot dead at Marseilles. The assassin was a Croat travelling with a Hungarian

passport. The Jugoslavs raised an outcry against the terrorism of the Hungarians that threatened the peace of the Balkans. A special session of the Council of the League was summoned and Eden was appointed *rapporteur*, with the duty of negotiating a settlement between the contestants. He was successful in his mediation, and a minor disturbance was kept within the bounds of peace.

It was a successful close to the Lord Privy Seal's first year. He had widened his knowledge of affairs. In his negotiations with statesmen of other nations he had confirmed the good opinions that had been formed about him at home. He was becoming a familiar public figure, the impeccably dressed Englishman, who always bore himself so well. He belonged to that class Henry James had once described—"The sort of young Englishman who looks particularly well abroad and whose general aspect—his inches, his limbs, his friendly eyes, the modulation of his voice and the fashion of his garments—excites on the part of those who encounter him in far countries on the ground of common speech a delightful sympathy of race." At his first appearances at Geneva he had been thought to be foppish, but the success of his diplomacy turned Geneva opinion enthusiastically in his favour.

As the year 1935 opened, plans were made for a further meeting with Hitler. On this occasion, the Lord Privy Seal was to accompany the Foreign Secretary.

The invitation for the Berlin meeting came from Hitler. It was readily accepted by the British Cabinet. There was satisfaction on both sides. The Cabinet had grounds for considering that there would be the chance of reaching a general settlement with the Germans. Hitler noted with pride that it would be the first time for sixty years that a British Foreign Secretary had been received in Berlin—since, that is, Bismarck had met Salisbury and Beaconsfield.

One result of the announcement was an immediate approach by the Russians with the suggestion that a British Minister should visit Moscow. If Simon were too occupied with affairs to be able to spare the time, they would be very happy to receive Eden. The Russians, who had recently been admitted to the League, had heard the rumours Ribbentrop was circulating that Hitler was prepared to do a deal with Britain and hence the invitation. The British Cabinet did not jump at the offer, but it was eventually agreed that on the conclusion of the Berlin meetings Eden should include

Moscow in a tour of Eastern Europe. For the occasion of the Berlin discussions, it was considered appropriate that our diplomacy should be backed by a gesture of force, but in essays of this character it was Hitler who scored the points.

The Berlin visit was fixed for March 8. With less than a week to go, the British Government published a White Paper on defence. This document, that appeared over the initials of the Prime Minister, stated the grounds for a modest degree of re-armament, and included a pointed reference to Germany: "His Majesty's Government have welcomed the declarations of the leaders of Germany that they desire peace. They cannot, however, fail to recognize that not only the forces, but the spirit in which the population, and especially the youth of the country is being organized, lend colour to, and substantiate the general feeling of insecurity which has already been incontestably generated." Read now, it seems to have been a characteristic understatement. Read then, it touched off the pacifist fire. Socialists and Liberals united in deploring a "tactless", "regrettable" publication.

In Berlin there was a tempest of protest. Hitler allowed himself to be affronted. On the pretext of nursing a sore throat, he retired to Berchtesgaden. He postponed the British visit. After a few days in retreat he returned to Berlin to announce that, in defiance of the Versailles Treaty, the German Government were to reimpose conscription and to establish an army of twelve corps and thirty-six divisions. The announcement was made on March 17, anniversary of the issue of the 1813 Russian manifesto that had set the signal for the war of liberation against Napoleon.

France made immediate protest to the League against the flagrant breach of Versailles. It was expected that the British visit to Berlin would now be called off. A British Note of mild protest was despatched, but this protest was softened by the accompanying query—would Hitler now receive John Simon?

The French were taken aback. British sympathizers on the Continent were distressed. Did the Foreign Secretary not realize what damage he was doing to waning British prestige? The very logic of the situation seemed to require that Britain should decline to seek any new agreement with the Leader of a state who did not honour the signature of his predecessors on scraps of paper signed at Versailles. But there it was for all to read—"His Majesty's

Government wish to be assured that the German Government still desire the visit to take place with the scope and for the purposes previously agreed."

Did Hitler still want the visit?—it was superfluous to ask. What more could he have hoped for at that moment? A British visit to Berlin must in the circumstances imply tacit consent to German treaty-breaking. The fact of the visit was sufficient for Hitler's purpose. He affably consented to receive the visitors.

Simon and Eden found themselves in the presence of a man who was little inclined towards negotiation, but resolved on the course he intended to pursue. What effect he produced on Eden is not on the record, but Simon's impressions we know, and they are in retrospect curious to read.

Simon drew a contrast between the dictators of Rome and Berlin—the Duce having all the appearance of a dictator and the Fuehrer lacking in any striking particular. But that he was in the presence of a man who was a danger to the peace of Europe, Simon was in no doubt, a man proof against argument, who conceived it to be his purpose to bring about the rehabilitation of the German people after the limitations and humiliations of the Treaty of Versailles. He was patently dangerous, and more dangerous for being sincere. Behind the vacuous face Simon saw the fanatic.

To his listeners, for he discoursed at them, Hitler made an avowal of his intentions, even to the absorption of Austria and the return of German Colonies. There would be no German co-operation either in disarmament or in collective security. One fact he let fall was disturbing, if it was to be credited, that the German air force had already reached parity of strength with the R.A.F. One point was made clear—Hitler would sign no Eastern Pact with the Russians. Simon was in favour of an Eastern Locarno, but Hitler would have no dealings with the Communists, whose creed he denounced as a danger to Europe.

When they were alone together, having listened to Hitler for two days, what did they say to each other, the Foreign Secretary and the Lord Privy Seal? Did Simon tell his junior of the major conclusion he had reached: If Germany was not going to co-operate to confirm the solidarity of Europe, then the rest of Europe had need to co-operate to confirm Europe's peace? Sir John's speculations ranging into the future, even encompassed the possibility of

the British Tories co-operating with the Russian Communists while the League of Nations thundered applause. Simon had his moments of vision. He could appreciate the less obvious possibilities of a situation, but he was lacking in the quality that translates conclusions into appropriate action. Europe co-operating to contain the Germans within Germany—clearly that was the policy to pursue against a completely non-co-operative Hitler. But it did not conform with the intentions of the British Cabinet or the pacifist mood of the British people.

The Soviet Union, to a greater degree than Germany, had remained outside the comity of Europe. The excesses of the revolution had raised the Bolshy bogey. Communist claims and Communist intrigue had not allayed prevailing mistrust. Not until 1934 were the Russians admitted to membership of the League.

Eden's visit was the first to Moscow by a Minister of the Crown since the Czars. He was accompanied by Lord Cranborne (now Lord Salisbury), his P.P.S., and a bevy of newspaper correspondents. The Minister was escorted to Moscow by M. Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, who had joined him in Berlin. He was welcomed to the capital by Litvinov, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and by the British Ambassador, Lord Chilston.

That afternoon (March 28) discussions were begun with Litvinov, who at a reception in the evening bade the Minister formally welcome. The visit, he said, marked a milestone in the history of the relations between the two countries. "I take the liberty of expressing my personal satisfaction at seeing Mr. Eden here, for, having worked side by side with him at the table of the League of Nations on the solution of international problems, I have had many opportunities of appreciating his personal gifts and high qualities."

The Lord Privy Seal replied that British foreign policy was based on the League. The essence of the League was universal, and it was clearly a great gain that a nation covering one-sixth of the world's surface, and numbering 170 million inhabitants, should have taken its place at Geneva. He was confident that peace, which was the prime object of the policy of Britain, was also the aim of Russia. The anxious position in Europe, to which Litvinov had referred, could be improved only by a frank exchange of views between representatives of the great nations.

The following morning the conversations were continued. It

was Eden's object to remove Soviet fears, springing from suspicion, that British policy was deliberately calculated to countenance and encourage the rapid growth of German armed strength, a belief that had been strengthened by the circumstance of the Simon visit to Berlin. His assurances to the contrary were well received, and he was able to break down the idea that British policy was hostile to Russia because Britain was politically unsympathetic towards the Communist régime.

There was a meeting with Stalin that afternoon. The two men seem to have been favourably impressed each by the other, a fact that was to yield results in the years that lay beyond the barrier of the future. Molotov as well as Litvinov was of the party. In the evening there was a gala performance at the Opera House. Semenova, the leading Russian ballerina, had been brought over from Turkey to do honour to the British visitors. The unfamiliar sound in Moscow of "God Save the King" was heard, as Eden, with the other visitors, entered. A thunder of cheers, lasting for several minutes, followed as they took their seats in the former royal box.

A round of social functions marked the following days. There was a visit to the Museum of Western Art, and lunch was taken at Litvinov's country house, the table being graced with a massive slab of butter on which was carved the famous slogan "Peace is indivisible". Eden was invited to inspect the new Moscow underground railway, of which his hosts were inordinately proud, and he was photographed seated in a coach for a ceremonial run over the course. The visitors were conducted over an aeroplane factory, and a second gala performance of ballet rounded off the trip.

The official communiqué was more communicative than the reticent announcements that customarily conceal the proceedings at international conferences. It referred to the complete friendliness and frankness in which the talks had proceeded. Mr. Eden, M. Molotov and M. Litvinov were of opinion that in the present international situation it was more than ever necessary to pursue endeavours to promote the building up of a system of collective security in Europe. It was emphasized in the conversations with M. Stalin that the organization of security in Eastern Europe and the proposed pact of mutual assistance did not aim at the encirclement of any state, but at the creation of equal security for all participants and that the participation on the part of Germany and Poland

would, therefore, be welcome as affording the best solution of the problem. The representatives of the two governments were happy to note that there was no conflict of interest between them on any of the main issues of international policy, and that this fact provided a firm foundation for the development of fruitful collaboration in the cause of peace.

After his return home Mr. Eden testified to his belief in the peacefulness of Stalin's immediate intentions. "Whatever the view we take of the experiment at present being tried in Soviet Russia," he said, "I have never been in any country which has more clearly cause to be fully occupied with work at home for many years to come. There is much leeway to be made up. An observer would indeed expect that Soviet Russia for her own sake would be adverse to anything which would dislocate the machinery which she is so laboriously building up and no greater dislocation could be imagined than war."

From these readings he found it difficult to share the apprehension which appeared to exist in Germany about military aggression by the Soviet. As he travelled back from Moscow to Warsaw he was impressed by the vast distances separating Russia from Germany. As he had flown from Moscow to Berlin he had noted that the distance across Polish territory was roughly that between England and Switzerland. This geographical factor reinforced the conclusion he had reached. Since the re-creation of the great Polish State the possibility of an aggression by Russia upon Germany had, he considered, become a geographical anachronism.

In Warsaw he found that there was another evaluation of possibilities. From Marshal Pilsudski and his Foreign Minister, Col. Beck, he learned that Poland's policy was based on an expectation that Russians and Germans might engage in war and a determination not to be involved in such a war if it were to take place. Their territory was not to be allowed as a passage to become a battleground for foreign troops. A few years later the same objections were to become an obstacle at a more critical moment in Poland's affairs. The future of Czechoslovakia was also discussed, and here, too, the Poles were non-co-operative. They would be no parties to the guarantee of Czech frontiers, for was not Polish Teschen part of Czechoslovakia?

In Prague Dr. Benes was more accommodating, but then the

Czechs had no claims to make. Their need was support to resist the claims of others.

His tour completed, Eden left by air for home. His 'plane ran into heavy snowstorms, in which he received a heavy shaking. He was nearing collapse when he landed at Cologne, to complete his journey by train. The doctors reported that his heart had been overtaxed by the strain, and that an interval of rest was essential for him. So it came about that he took no part in the conference at Stresa that was the next incident in the international time-table, fateful in its consequences for the peoples and the peace of Europe.

The Stresa meeting was a turning-point in Europe's affairs, the high-water mark of co-operation against Hitler. They discussed Hitler and they formed their plans to hold him in check. They resolved that they would stand in amity to guard the independence of Austria and to maintain the *status quo* in Europe. The Stresa front of Britain, France and Italy would be a barrier against Hitlerism, but beyond Europe their agreement did not extend, and that limitation was the cause of their undoing.

Mussolini was ready to stand in with Britain and France, but in return he looked for acquiescence in the execution of his own designs outside Europe. Already he had struck a bargain with Laval. France would offer no opposition to his progress in North Africa. He was marshalling his forces to strike at Abyssinia and extend to the East the Italian territories of Somaliland and Eritrea.

Mussolini arrived at Stresa prepared to do a deal with Britain, but, to his surprise, Simon and MacDonald did not raise the question of Abyssinia with him. Seeing that his military preparations had been plain for all Europe to note, he assumed that the silence of the Ministers implied British acquiescence in his African enterprise. To obtain that acquiescence he had been prepared to bargain, and since no word was spoken, he made the assumption that the bargain had been struck in silence.

Simon and MacDonald went home, gratified with the results of their mission, unconscious of the conclusions that Mussolini had formed. It was their last joint contribution to affairs. On their return, MacDonald resigned the Premiership in favour of Baldwin. Simon, in the ensuing changes, was shunted from the Foreign Office. Eden, promoted to the Cabinet, was to face the consequences of the omissions of the British representatives at Stresa.

CHAPTER VI

MEMBER FOR THE LEAGUE

WHEN Ramsay MacDonald gave place to Stanley Baldwin and the Government was reconstituted in June 1935, Anthony Eden was plainly marked out for promotion. During his term as Lord Privy Seal he had consolidated his position at Westminster. In the professional circles of his department, his ability was acknowledged. He had done well at Geneva, and was esteemed among Continental statesmen. In the House he was heard with respect that was not confined to his own party. The note of idealism that could sometimes be detected behind the phrases of the diplomat made an appeal to the Liberals and the liberal-minded Socialists. The younger Conservatives were behind him. The diehards of the party mistrusted what they termed his "emotionalism", but he was extending the range of his appeal. Neville Chamberlain conceded that the young man was coming on rapidly—"Not only can he make a good speech, but he has a good head and what advice he gives is listened to by the Cabinet."

Baldwin, when he came to pick his team, was uncertain about the Foreign Office. Simon was booked for transfer to the Home Office. For his successor at the Foreign Office the choice lay between Hoare and Eden. The first intention was to reserve Hoare for the Viceroyalty of India, which was also Sir Samuel's preference, for Indian affairs had been his province for the past four years. Baldwin, however, had second thoughts. It was urged upon him that Hoare, with his success in reconciling Indian differences, was the man to produce agreements in Europe. Neville Chamberlain gave Hoare his support on the ground that Eden would profit from experience in one of the departmental ministries before taking over at the Foreign Office.

With characteristic indecision Baldwin left the final choice to Hoare, who agreed to sink his personal wishes and take the assignment in foreign affairs. He brought to bear on them a fresh outlook, but one comparatively uninformed. There was the shrewdness, thoroughness, mastery of detail and the qualities that make for

capability that he had inherited from a line of Quaker bankers. As an able administrator Hoare's reputation was among the highest —one of those men who are able to pass from department to department, serving in each in turn with exemplary competence. Was this a sufficient recommendation for the responsibility of the country's foreign policy at a time that was patently crucial in European history?

The less experience the new chief had of affairs the more need there was to retain Eden as associate minister. Baldwin agreed and so it came about that the young man, his protégé, was given Cabinet rank and the appointment of Minister for League of Nations affairs. In status, Eden ranked with the Foreign Secretary and he was accorded full access to despatches and to the staff of the department. Cranborne (now Lord Salisbury), his Parliamentary Private Secretary, was also promoted and retained at the Foreign Office as an additional Under-Secretary. By this means the Government was able to retain the benefit of Eden's experience and the electoral advantage of the support of that large section of the people who placed their trust in him and the League.

The two Ministers found no difficulty in agreeing upon the demarcation of their responsibilities and the manner of their co-operation. The Prime Minister gave the arrangements his approval, but there were rumblings of dissent from the critics. "Dyarchy at the Foreign Office" was the complaint, divided responsibility, divided councils. Winston Churchill voiced his protest at the existence of two Foreign Secretaries, quoting the authority of Lloyd George who, when supporting unity of command during the war, had said, "It is not a question of one general being better than another, but of one general being better than two."

Eden was not prepared to agree that anything in the nature of dyarchy existed. "There are," he said, "no two kings of Brentford on one throne, and I am very proud and privileged to be allowed to work with Sir Samuel Hoare."

The new Foreign Secretary found an embarrassing legacy from his predecessor. At Hitler's suggestion, Simon had agreed to negotiate a naval agreement with the Germans. The discussions took place in London, and Hoare obtained the Cabinet authority to conclude the agreement by which the Germans agreed to limit their

fleet to 35 per cent of the British tonnage. When the pact had been signed there were protests from the French and the Italians that they had not been sufficiently consulted. The Russians considered that the re-emergence of a German fleet was a danger to their flank in the Baltic. There was the fact, too, that Britain had endorsed, was even a party to, German treaty-breaking.

Eden set out for Paris to make explanations to Laval. He found the French Minister less disturbed than the Paris newspapers, although he had to listen to a reproof for condoning and participating in a further breach of the treaty of Versailles. It was the more regrettable that it had been announced to the world on the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

From Paris he travelled on to Rome to tackle a grave threat to Stresa solidarity. Believing that he had been given a free hand, Mussolini had been pushing ahead with his preparations for an attack on Abyssinia. He made no secret about his designs, and had boasted of his intention to wipe out the shameful scar of Adowa and the massacre of the Italians in 1895. Italian garrisons in Eritrea were reinforced and 50,000 troops were mobilized.

Abyssinia was a member of the League of Nations, sharing in the privileges and responsibilities of membership on an equal footing with Italy and the other member states. When the dispute over a frontiers incident developed with Italy, the Abyssinians, availing themselves of their rights, appealed to the League. What was the Council to do, or rather what were Britain and France to do? There was no ignoring the appeal. To evade it would mean the effective end of the League. There were British Ministers who would have raised no objection. Duff Cooper was one, and he was no lover of the dictators, who would have had no regrets at the final dissolution of the "dying corpse at Geneva". But with the League would go the system of collective security on which British policy was based.

Eden, accordingly, was instructed by the Cabinet to visit Rome with an offer for Mussolini. The British Government, as a contribution to a settlement, were prepared to cede a narrow tract of British Somaliland to give the Abyssinians an outlet to the Red Sea, and, in return, the Abyssinians were prepared to make concessions to the Italians.

For all his success in personal contacts, Eden was able to make

no headway with Mussolini. The Duce derided the offer. He had already had experience of the cession of a dozen palm trees and a strip of desert. He demanded the grant of vastly more territory than was offered and the control over the rest of Abyssinia in the manner in which Britain had control of Egypt. He was indignant at British interference—after all, Laval had given him a free hand. "Economically," interjected Eden. The Duce would not concede that the correction was accurate.

After some further exchanges, the tone of the discussions deteriorated. The two men had had no respect for each other and anger inflamed their dislike. Eden returned home with an enduring antipathy against the Italian, who, he was heard to mutter, was no gentleman.

In the House, later, Eden had to answer the critics of his meeting with Mussolini. Why, he was asked, was it necessary to call on a Minister of the Crown to do what the Ambassador in Rome could have done? The Cabinet, he replied, had chosen that method because they wished to underline, by a direct message from a member of the Government, the gravity of their concern at the course events were taking. It was considered that the chances of agreement would be to some extent enhanced. In an issue where the stakes were so important no effort should be spared that could, to however small an extent, raise the chances of success.

Mr. Churchill had begged him to take care of himself. "It was very kind and very generous of him? but I think he will agree that what was at stake was not whether the Government, or individual members of the Government, should be taken care of, but whether a settlement could be arrived at. In the circumstances we were bound to take risks which, perhaps, in other circumstances, I should not have been very happy to take myself."

There could be no complaint after this meeting that Italy did not know where Britain stood. Eden spoke frankly and forcibly. "I expressed to Mussolini the grave concern of His Majesty's Government at the turn which events were taking between Italy and Abyssinia. I said that our reasons were not dictated by our interests in Africa, but by our membership of the League of Nations." The British proposal was then explained in detail. "I must regret," Eden added drily, "that this suggestion did not commend itself to Signor Mussolini." He did not elaborate, but the House had

become aware of the nature of the sharp words that had been exchanged and there was general laughter when, later, Hoare remarked that Mussolini and Eden "could not have spoken more plainly to each other".

For the next five months Eden was fully engaged in the Abyssinian dispute. He took a leading part in the discussions at Geneva, in the first phase to find some form of compromise that would stave off war and later, when Italy had struck, to organize sanctions against the aggressor. His part in the affair has been criticized on varying and conflicting grounds that he did too little and that he did too much. The opponents of the League, the isolationists and the sympathizers with Italy complained that he stirred up trouble. At the other end of the scale were the Left Wing critics who could see nothing but dodgery on the part of Britain, a planned sell-out by Britain and France to Italy, with Eden and Hoare putting up the pretence of a sham fight. The idealists of the Left would have been satisfied with nothing short of a punitive war against Italy.

Eden's policy was to avoid war and to go to any reasonable lengths to avoid it. The statesman labouring for peace can scarcely find satisfaction in a policy that would transform a conflict in Africa into a major war in Europe. It was his misfortune and the League's undoing that French affairs at that time were in the charge of Laval, the slippery politician who was finally to be shot as a traitor. Over Abyssinia his attitude—it was largely supported by his countrymen—was grounded not on the ideals of the League, but on the interests of France. The goodwill of Italy meant that French divisions need not be retained to guard the Alpine frontier. Better preserve Italian friendship than Abyssinia. There was, too, a tincture of resentment over Britain's recent approaches to Germany.

Both Eden and Laval were interpreters of the majority opinion in their respective countries. Both of them failed in their objectives. From their differences resulted the failure to make the League an effective instrument against aggression.

On Eden's return from Rome the Cabinet were in no doubt as to the difficulties ahead. "It is clear," noted Neville Chamberlain, "that Mussolini has made up his mind to eat up Abyssinia regardless of treaties, covenants and pacts."

The problem was passed on to Geneva. Eden scored an initial

success by compelling Italy to agree to a League inquiry into the original frontier incident at Wal Wal. His colleagues at home acknowledged that he showed courage and skill in the negotiations. But the major threat remained. Italian troops awaited only the order to march. At Geneva the problems and possibilities of sanctions were explored. There was no unanimity about their employment should the occasion arise, nor about their effectiveness should they be decided upon. Eden's conclusion was that they might be useful. It was as well to be prepared.

In London there were anxious discussions with ambassadors and ministers, representatives of the Dominions, leaders of the Little Entente, the United States Ambassador. The party leaders were invited by Hoare to the Foreign Office and the Elder Statesmen, Austen Chamberlain, Robert Cecil (now Viscount Cecil), and Winston Churchill. Before he would take part in the discussions, Winston mischievously enquired what Eden's views might be. "I will get him to come," said Hoare, and a smiling Eden joined the conference. "Don't let your diplomacy get ahead of your naval preparations," was Winston's contribution to the discussions.

The sum of advice received was that Britain should stand by the League but should not go farther than the French would go with them. That was not likely to be very far. Neville Chamberlain, surveying the prospects with a realist eye, thought it unlikely that Laval would consent to anything that might embroil him with Italy—"yet if Mussolini goes on he will torpedo the League and the small states in Europe will just race one another to Berlin". There was the dilemma—save the League and crack the Stresa front, or preserve Stresa solidarity and crack the League. In Berlin, Hitler was able to foresee advantages whatever the decision.

The discussion at Geneva proceeded. Eden took the lead in the work of the Council. Laval gave him lukewarm support. Laval was in a dilemma of his own contrivance. He had pledged himself to Mussolini and he dared not break with Britain. He deplored what he termed Eden's fanatical insistence on involving the League against the Italians.

Time for a settlement yet remained, and there was a measure of satisfaction in that. Without the League what would the position have been? "Almost certainly hopeless," Eden replied. "The League may not be able to prevent all wars, but it does make sure that the

machinery of arbitration, conciliation and negotiation is used to the utmost limit."

A date in September was fixed when the Assembly would have to reach a decision on the dispute. Eden's zeal on behalf of the League intensified Mussolini's disgust. Eden was singled out as a target for Italian abuse and derision. His well-dressed figure, languidly portrayed, was made to personify the decadent English sheltering behind the League of Nations.

In August Parliament rose and Ministers separated for their holidays. Baldwin went off to Aix. Hoare retired to bed in Norfolk with arthritis and the draft of the speech he was to deliver at Geneva. His Foreign Office advisers did not encourage him to pin his faith on the League, but public opinion was hardening against Italy. He resolved to give a strong lead to the Assembly, hoping that a display of "League fervour" might deter the Duce.

Eden pursued his labours for a settlement. There were negotiations in Paris, a scheme, an opportunity for compromise. The prospects fluctuated from day to day. There was hope—there was no hope, the Duce and his people would commit suicide rather than climb down.

In September Cabinet Ministers were recalled from their holidays. Baldwin was brought back from Aix. Approval was given to Hoare's speech. The Cabinet would uphold Britain's obligations under the Covenant.

Eden announced the decision at Geneva a few days later, but it was Hoare who made the speech of the hour. In his precise style, he delivered himself of his carefully prepared manifestation of League fervour: "His Majesty's Government will be second to none to fulfil within the measure of their capacity the obligations that the Covenant places upon them. . . . In conformity with its precise and explicit obligations the League stands and my country stands with it for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression."

The delegates were thrilled by Hoare's phrases. The speech made an impression that surprised its author. It seemed that he would succeed in making the will of Britain prevail, if not among the nations, at least among members of the League. Said M. Herriot: "This is the answer to the speech which I myself made on

the Covenant at Geneva in 1924. France has been waiting for it ever since." For sixteen years France had sought the backing of Britain; then, at the moment Britain was ready to advance, the French under Laval drew back.

For the moment Mussolini had paused. The Committee of Five produced another plan. The Abyssinians were prepared for concessions. It began to appear a settlement would be negotiated. Then Mussolini swept the negotiations aside. Relying on his understanding with Laval, he bade defiance to the League. On October 3 Italian troops crossed the Abyssinian frontier.

The world's hopes and fears were now centred in Geneva. The League of Nations was facing its decisive trial as an instrument for suppressing war. It had emerged as the only gain achieved by suffering humanity from the wreckage of the First World War. Already there were results to its credit, and failures to offset them. Mussolini had broken the peace by the occupation of Corfu, the Poles by the seizure of Vilna. League authority had been defied by the Japanese, who had seized Mukden and set up the puppet state of Manchukuo.

There was no evading the challenge on Abyssinia. Either the League must prevail against Mussolini or it would be proved ineffective as the means of checking the aggressor. It was the test case and the test was made under the least favourable circumstances. As a world organization it had been crippled at birth by the defection of the United States. The Japanese had withdrawn, so too had the Germans. Under Laval the French would take no action that could with decency be avoided. The responsibility for leading the League against the aggressor was borne by Britain, and not all members of the British Government were supporters of an active policy.

As League champion, Eden had behind him the younger Conservatives. Some Ministers, Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and Hoare among them, were in favour of the application of sanctions. Other Ministers shared the dislike of the High Tories for the peace palace of Geneva. They quoted the recent declaration of General Smuts, one of the sponsor founders of the League. "I cannot visualize the League of Nations as a military machine. It was not conceived for that purpose, it was not equipped for such functions. If the attempt is made to transform it into a military machine, into

a system to carry on war for the purpose of preventing war, then I think its fate is sealed."

The omens were not propitious, but under Eden's leadership the League Council had prepared for the emergency. No time was lost in formally declaring Italy to be an aggressor state. Sanctions were to follow. What sanctions? Military sanctions were proposed. The closing of the Suez Canal and joint operations by the British and French navies would quickly have ended Mussolini's madness. The dictator would have toppled from his pedestal.

The ships were there. The British Mediterranean Fleet, reinforced and at war strength, would have been adequate for the occasion. Laval would not co-operate. He found a pretext for refusing. By reinforcing in the Mediterranean, he declared, the British had taken action outside the League. It was provocative and the French thereby were absolved from common action.

British Ministers were not prepared to act alone. The advice they had received from the party leaders, Churchill among them, had been not to go in action beyond the French. So the chance was lost. Mussolini had cast 250,000 hostages upon the barren shore 2,000 miles from home. He was not compelled to pay the forfeit. The lesser measure of economic sanctions was agreed upon, sanctions that Italy would accept, onerous though they might be, sanctions that did not involve the League in war. Could sanctions of this nature be effective? Was it not an avowed confession of the League's weakness, and the virtual end of the League as an instrument for the outlawry of war? The Minister for League Affairs did not agree.

That autumn Eden gave his views on the Abyssinian crisis speaking as one of what was termed the "missing generation". The ranks of his generation had been decimated by the Great War. Those who survived held that they had something to contribute to the political life of the generation, something not to be contributed by those who had never seen active service.

"We saw war. We do not want to see another. How is another to be avoided? At present we are in a period of evolution. The nations are striving to create a system of collective security by means of which they hope they can outlaw war. The task must oftentimes be arduous. I know of none more appealing in its essence to one who has the happiness of mankind at heart. The maintenance

of peace is the first condition of all progress. So let us not lose heart."

Eden might find cause for modest satisfaction. Others did not share his view, but felt that a great opportunity had been missed. Under his leadership, it was argued, fifty nations had banded themselves against Italian aggression: instead of resolute action they were committed to the pretence of sham sanctions. Thus Lloyd George: "First of all there was a great pretence that they were going to take strong action against Italy—I was taken in for twenty-four hours myself. Then there were elaborate arrangements to deprive Italy of those things she could do without."

Eden's argument was that the effect of the sanctions that were imposed was continuous and cumulative and would ultimately have an influence in bringing about a cessation of Italian hostilities. But that postulated that the war would extend over a period of time. Mussolini was forever urging his Generals to move faster, to win the race against the paralysis of sanctions.

British interest shifted from Geneva to the constituencies. A General Election was held in November. Baldwin fought on a programme of support for the League and moderate re-armament. Neville Chamberlain was in favour of an all-out campaign for rearming, but he was overruled. Neville at this time had not dedicated himself to the role of apostle of appeasement.

Abyssinia, Italy and the League were the main topics for electoral rhetoric. The part the young Minister for the League had taken at Geneva contributed materially to the Government's cause. He was the champion of the League, the man of the moment, the most popular politician in the country. Even political opponents sounded his praises. The rancorous Snowden, whose tongue was more inclined to the caustic, paid him a warm personal tribute. Lloyd George excused what he termed the ineffectiveness of League action on the ground that Eden had not been given a free hand. Eden was the figure of the hour and his words were received with acclamation.

"It is fashionable," he said to one raptly attentive audience, with kindly jest at his leader Baldwin, "for politicians to look forward to retirement—to pigs, poultry and a pot of ale by the hearthside. I promise to allow myself no such indulgence. We are all moving into an era when nations will strive to understand one another.

Through the League alone can we hope to create in the world that new order as a result of which no nation would ever contemplate for an instant the use of war as an instrument of national policy. We are ready at all times to play our part in the maintenance of peace. We must attain this or perish. We saw war. We do not wish to see another. The League affords us the means to avoid the repetition of such a situation."

The electors gave Baldwin the tribute of a handsome vote of confidence. The Socialist representation was not as embarrassingly slight as in the previous House of Commons, but the Government still had a two to one majority. The diversions of electioneering over, Ministers could resume their search for a compromise that would bring to an end the fighting in Abyssinia. At Geneva, Eden went ahead with the application and extension of sanctions. The whole conception of the new peace system was at stake. There were rumblings from Mussolini. There were those who thought that he might attack Britain.

It was the possibility of progress towards a compromise that drew a reluctant Hoare to Paris in December. Laval had worked out a plan. Hoare and Vansittart studied it. Two days of discussion followed, Vansittart assisting his Chief. Hoare was induced to agree. The proposals were sent to London. With Hoare's backing behind them they were endorsed, though with reluctance, by the Cabinet. They involved the surrender of large tracts of Abyssinia. Before they were submitted to Haile Selassie they were divulged in the Press. There was an immediate storm of protest.

The Hoare-Laval plan would have accorded to Italy territories beyond those demanded by Mussolini before hostilities began. It would have left some territories for Haile Selassie to rule over, which was more than he had when hostilities eventually ended When the plan was made public, and it was seen that, despite all the fine words, the censures and the sanctions at Geneva, the Duce was to be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his aggression, there was a public outcry. Letters of protest poured into the newspaper offices. The champions of the League rose with the fury of betrayed idealists. At Westminster the loyalty of many Government supporters could no longer be relied upon.

It was rumoured that Eden had offered his resignation as a protest at the Laval plan. The fact that he was summoned to

Buckingham Palace for an audience with the King seemed to give colour to the report. Eden indignantly repudiated the suggestion. There had never been the shadow of a difference between himself and Hoare. "If in truth I had been in constant disagreement with him what a poor sort of creature I must be still to be occupying my position on the Treasury bench."

Dissatisfaction in the House reached the pitch where the Government was in danger. The Cabinet was forced to retreat. Approval of the Paris plan was cancelled. The Ministry survived. Sir Samuel Hoare resigned.

Baldwin, who had stood before the House as a penitent murmuring "peccavi", was badly hit. His biographer tells us that he had the appearance of a man who had been crushed; he had been struck at his most sensitive point, he had failed to interpret the feelings of the British people, he who prided himself on being their most sensitive and skilled interpreter. He had fallen in the estimation of the country, badly shaken in prestige.

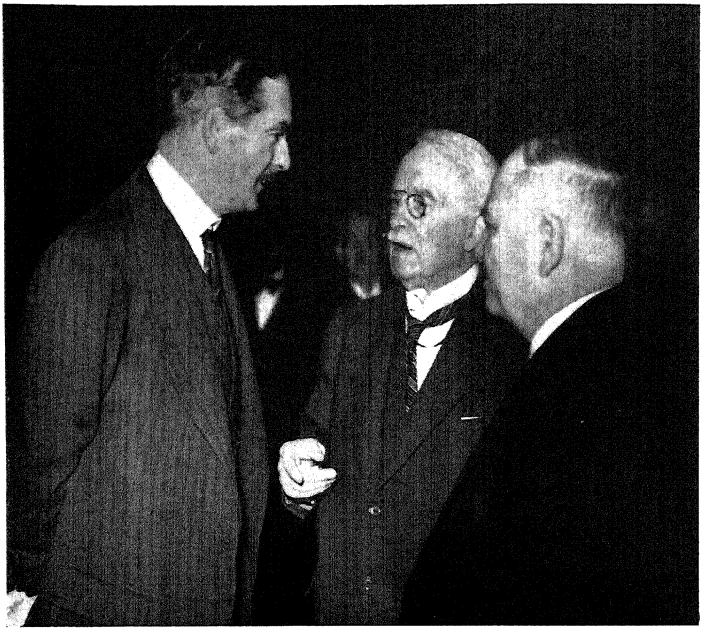
A successor for Hoare had to be chosen. There was little question as to the choice. Eden's reputation had not been affected by the crisis. In the public eye he was the champion of the League. He was summoned to Downing Street. The question of the succession was placed before him. He suggested that his old Chief should be brought back to fill the vacancy and he offered to serve under Austen Chamberlain. Baldwin had already taken the advice of the architect of Locarno and put to him the question: What do you think about Eden? Austen had retained his kindly interest in the young man he had launched in public life. He had no hesitation in replying that he had always looked on Eden as having the makings of a Foreign Minister.

The post was offered and accepted. So it came about that three days before Christmas in the year 1935, Anthony Eden became His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He was then thirty-eight years of age, the youngest holder of his office since Lord Greville in 1791.

The appointment was well received by the younger Conservatives, but there were mutterings among the elders, the anti-League men and the isolationists. The High Tories had no liking for being dragged by Eden the idealist along the path of collective security. Six months before, they had looked to Hoare to prevent him from

The impeccably attired young Minister, in white waistcoat and carrying his famous Homburg hat, is in disguise as an airman about to lead his squadron—No. 500 (County of Kent) Auxiliary—in exercises from their camp at Tangmere

In battledress he takes part in an exercise of tanks



Above, as Foreign Secretary during the war he is seen with Lloyd George and Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador, at a Red Army Birthday Celebration. Below he is with French Ministers, including the notorious Pierre Laval

landing us in a mess at Geneva. Now Hoare was gone and Eden was in control. There must be a steadying influence. The system of dyarchy was continued with Lord Halifax in the junior role. There was no figure more respected by the Tories than the tall and stately Halifax, who had returned from India with the prestige of a successful Viceroy. Baldwin's closest friend, High Churchman, of high principles and strength of character, he was the man the older Conservatives would have preferred at the Foreign Office. It was reassuring to know that he was at hand to give balance and stability to the young idealist.

CHAPTER VII

FOREIGN SECRETARY

IN the chronicling of a career it is easy to turn the page and start a new chapter for a new phase. For Eden in his new appointment there was no such opportunity. There was no new chapter, but the continuance of the old with its confusions, its uncertainties and its menaces. The situation was inherited and so was the policy. No fresh start could be made. From the predicament in which they were involved there was no immediate escape. Italy had not been halted, Abyssinia had not been saved, the Stresa front was in ruins, the League in decline. Britain's prestige was little above Geneva's. The bluff of the Hoare speech had been called, Mussolini had been proved correct in his assessment of the chances.

Looking back, it now seems it would have been better that Baldwin and his Government, not Hoare alone, should have resigned. A new approach would have been preferable, since the old had failed. In a dictator-menaced world, the old way of alliances offered the best hope since collective security could not give security. Britain closely linked with France might have afforded the security Geneva could not provide. This, in effect, was the policy Eden pursued though it needed to be masked by advocacy of the League and collective security.

A change of Government would have enabled a change to be made in ministerial language. Rarely have the electors been so divorced from the realities, rarely so great a divergence between what Ministers thought and talked in the council chamber and what they imparted in public to the people. Encouraged by members of the Opposition—led by George Lansbury, the pacifist, who would have disbanded the Army and Navy—the people had been indulging in an emotional flood of pacifism and League of Nations idealism—the League to stop war, but no arms to back the League.

It has been the stock argument for the defence of the Baldwin-Chamberlain Governments that they could not re-arm because the electors would have ejected them from office, but the elector is capable of education. During the Thirties, the party leaders did not

educate him in the reality of affairs, thereby neglecting their responsibilities as democratic Ministers. There was little of the plain, sharp speaking, with most of the facts disclosed, to which we, in our day, have become accustomed. Realities were concealed by suppression, evasion, and blanketed out by the jargon of the times—appeasement of Europe, collective security, the basis of a general settlement in Europe, and non-aggression pacts. Public speeches were littered with the phrases that rolled from practised lips. But the realities with which the statesmen were dealing were largely concealed from view.

From this criticism Eden's speeches cannot be held free. There was so much he knew, and so little that he told. As a diplomat, engaged in negotiations of delicacy, he had reason for restraint, but a Minister has his responsibilities to Parliament and to the electors. Ministers who did not tell dug a pit for themselves and came in the end to be the victims of their own reticence, thwarted by the restraints of pacifist opinion they had done little to convert.

In Italy the news of Eden's appointment was bitterly assailed. The effectiveness of his work at Geneva and his fidelity to the League have been called in question. It is necessary only to read what the Italian publicists wrote to remove any doubts. In Italy his zeal and his sincerity as League champion were not under-estimated. While the Foreign Office was still vacant Mussolini's spokesman put it abroad that if Eden were to be appointed it would be looked upon as an unfriendly act, a bar to the prospects of conciliation.

Abuse from the Italians did Eden no harm, but served to recommend him the more to his countrymen. Later it was said in Italy that no two statesmen had more reason to be grateful to each other than Mussolini and Eden, for without the one the Duce would never have conquered Abyssinia and without the other Eden would not have reached the Foreign Office.

Eden's immediate problem on taking office was what now to do over Abyssinia. The war proceeded, and the Abyssinian chiefs by their mistaken tactics were doing their best to lose it quickly. Sanctions were slow in their effect.

There was a strong body of opinion for cutting our losses, washing our hands of Abyssinia and the League. But, having gone so far, there could be no question of throwing up the sponge and there was pressure of opinion to take into account—pressure from

the Trades Unions, from the Dominions, and even from the United States. It was necessary to give the League the test of a fair trial to establish whether it could be made to work.

Britain, almost alone of the nations, had carried out to the full her obligations to the League. Business with Italy was at a standstill, the export of coal had ceased. The Mediterranean Fleet was under the strain of maintaining war strength. Sanctions were not hampering Italy. Eden proposed a ban on petrol. This, could it have been made complete, would have been an impediment to Italian operations, but the French would not agree.

Early in March, Eden was in Paris. He returned with an impression of deep French anxiety. Were sanctions to be intensified, then Mussolini would leave the League, denounce Locarno and line up with Hitler. The Cabinet considered his report. There was a unanimous conclusion—to temporize, to negotiate, to gain time for the completion of the programme of rearmament that had been begun.

Peace moves as well as the petrol sanction were discussed at Geneva, for, as Eden said, the League was not to be thought of only in the negative role of policeman. Laval fell. Flandin took his place at Geneva, and proved rather more co-operative, but he hesitated to agree to the oil sanction. A decision was deferred. Eden made it clear that his Government considered that a petrol embargo would be ineffective to check Mussolini, but, nevertheless, he considered that the embargo should be enforced. The French thought that another attempt at conciliation should first be made.

Before he was prepared to agree, Flandin sought military assurances from Britain as the price of his co-operation. The oil embargo would mark the end of goodwill with the Italians and the final rupture of the Franco-Italian agreement. What was to be forfeited from the Italians the French wished to make good from the British. To Eden Flandin put the question: Are you prepared to extend and strengthen your Locarno undertakings by a formal alliance with us? Eden asked for time to put the matter before the Cabinet. We, looking back, may regard the answer as self-evident. Since Italy was alienated, the closest of ties were necessary between Britain and France, in view of the German danger. To a member of the Government in 1935 the answer was by no means self-evident. There was then no general appreciation of Hitler's purposes.

Even had the conclusion been drawn that a Franco-British alliance was essential, it would still have been objected that it was not politically practicable. British opinion was moving against the French and towards sympathy with the Germans. Among soldiers who had fought in the war, anti-French feeling was particularly strong. This had an important influence on British Ministers, among whom there was a general feeling to reject the French request.

In Berlin, Hitler had been watching events. He had been pretty accurately advised by his Ambassador in London as to the state of Ministerial opinion. Von Hoesch had reported that if the Rhine zone were remilitarized, the British would take no action. Hitler decided that the moment had arrived to take advantage of the weakening of the Stresa Front.

The Rhineland was Germany's immediate grievance. When the war ended, the French had asked for their frontier to be extended to the Rhine. This was refused them, but by the Peace Treaty a demilitarized zone was established in the Rhineland. It was not to be fortified or occupied by German troops. Early in March, when the question of a Franco-British Alliance was still in question, Hitler proposed to his Generals the immediate occupation of the Rhineland. The Generals demurred. The French, they represented, would take immediate action and would occupy the Rhineland as years before, under Poincaré, they had occupied the Ruhr. Hitler backed his hunch against the Generals. He would take his own life if the French resisted. The orders were given. The Germans went in, a few battalions at first, no more than nineteen battalions at any time. They had been given neither bullets for their rifles nor shells for their guns. Their orders were to withdraw if the French appeared on the scene. It would have needed only a few French divisions to have sent them packing, but not one poilu was moved.

With a craft in manœuvring in which he was the easy superior of his opponents, Hitler combined his coup with an offer made in terms of sweet reasonableness to settle outstanding differences. It was his own adaptation of the process of the carrot and the stick. No words, however sweet and reasonable they might be, could placate the French, but the British—was it so difficult to tempt the simple British? So the Fuehrer baited his trap.

Before the Reichstag on March 7 Hitler made a much-heralded

announcement. He began by denouncing the Treaty of Locarno. It had been shattered, he claimed, by the French, who had concluded an alliance with the Russians. In place of Locarno he was prepared to offer new pacts of peace, agreements with France and Belgium to last for twenty-five years. There should be a non-aggression pact with Holland too, if Holland wished. He was even willing, such was his air of reasonableness, to return to the League of Nations so long as it was a League freed from association with the diktat of Versailles. Peace was his aim, peace for a generation, for he had "no further territorial demands to make in Europe".

In the midst of those reasonably sounding phrases came the announcement that was the occasion for the speech: "In this historic hour German troops in the Western provinces of the Reich are just occupying their future peacetime garrisons." The Reichstag offered its ovation. Hitler withdrew to await the outcome. Would his Rhineland gamble succeed? His future, Germany's future, and more than the future of Europe was bound up in the answer.

It was the last easy chance for the democracies to check Germany and unseat the Fuehrer, for they still enjoyed superior strength. Germany was an armed camp, all the national effort directed to the purposes of re-arming, but the arms and the armies were only in the process of development. France, even without British support, was incomparably stronger. Poincaré would not have hesitated, but Sarraut, the Premier of that emergency, was no Poincaré. He favoured the dispatch of troops, and so did the President, Lebrun, but they had not the decisiveness to impose their will on their Cabinet. The Generals were hesitant—the hesitancy of Generals is a curious and persistent feature of military affairs before the guns begin to fire. The Cabinet voted. By a bare majority immediate military intervention was rejected.

What would Britain do? It was the first major test for the new Foreign Secretary. His immediate reaction was firm and definite. Eden summoned the German Ambassador to inform him that the British Government were bound to take a serious view of Hitler's action. In a short statement in the House of Commons that same afternoon he said that the British Government considered themselves to be bound to France and Belgium by their obligations under Locarno.

A further statement was made to the House by the Prime Minister, less forcible in its emphasis. "We have no more desire," said Baldwin, "than to keep calm, to keep our heads, and to continue to try to bring France and Germany together in friendship with ourselves."

The difference in emphasis was noted by the commentators. There was chatter about the possibility of a Cabinet clash. It was no more than the idle gossip of the uninformed. Eden's preference would have been for taking a strong line, but a clash in the Cabinet was not within the range of possibilities. He had no thought of challenging the Prime Minister, nor, had he done so, would he have had the backing of many of his colleagues. They agreed that Hitler had once again broken the peace treaties, but after all, "why shouldn't a man walk into his own backyard?" The phrase epitomized British opinion. The Dominion Governments had not ratified Locarno: they would never consent to fight over the Rhine.

The Foreign Secretary arranged to meet French Ministers in Paris. Halifax accompanied him. With backward glances at Hoare's meeting with Laval, it was recognized that there were advantages in having Halifax available as support for the young Minister, and as a steadying influence. They were given precise instructions—to recommend that the League should condemn Germany and reaffirm the sanctity of Treaties, thus paving the way for new negotiations with Hitler and new agreements. The French must be made to realize, said Baldwin, that Britain was in no condition to fight for Locarno even were that desirable. Germany crushed by France and Russia would be a Communist Germany. Hitler's lectures to Simon on the Bolshevik menace had not been forgotten.

The Belgians as well as the French joined in the Paris talks. The Italians declined to participate; while they were exposed to sanctions they could not be expected to defend Locarno. The British Ministers were met with proposals for immediate and forcible action. Hitler should be directed to withdraw his troops from the Rhineland under threat of immediate sanctions if he declined.

Eden stated British objections. When it was a question of military unpreparedness Flandin straightway offered to undertake the job single-handed, given the authority of her Locarno partners, Britain and Belgium. As to negotiations with Hitler for a new pact, tied up with the League, Flandin said no, not until the Rhineland

had been evacuated. Eden was reminded of his statement in the House. Would the British Government be prepared to translate the Locarno guarantee into a definite alliance?

With nothing decided, the talks were adjourned. The Locarno Powers and the League Council would meet in London in two days' time.

Eden, reporting to his colleagues on the Paris meeting, found that there would be no support for anything that might involve war. His championship of the French case produced some effect. He found Neville Chamberlain to be on his side. Neville had not hitherto concerned himself conspicuously with foreign affairs, but when the French arrived he took a hand in the discussions, warning Flandin that British opinion would not support sanctions. Flandin retorted that the mere threat of force would be sufficient: Hitler would yield without the necessity for action. Neville would not accept this as a "reliable estimate of a mad dictator's reactions".

Eden might press the French case upon his colleagues. He was met with the reply: The League and collective security had been grudgingly supported by the French over Abyssinia: why now should Britain contribute to France's security over the Rhineland?

What British Ministers were not brought to realize was that not merely France's, but Europe's security was involved. Did Eden's vision pierce thus far into the future?

Of the opinion of the man in the street there was no doubt. He was writing to M.P.s and to the newspapers against any Continental commitments. Eden received letters enough urging that his duty was to come to terms with Hitler and make a lasting peace in Europe. Ministers in a democracy are glad enough to rest their case on the solid basis of public opinion when opinion supports the policy they have chosen to pursue. Over Abyssinia they had followed opinion half-way. Over the Rhineland, opinion and policy were at one.

The London discussions ended in talk. The League Council was notified that Germany had violated Locarno, which was patent for the world to see. The Locarno Powers, summoned to a formal conference, rejected the French case for sanctions, agreed to demand of Germany that the new frontier should not be fortified, and suggested that an international force should be sent to occupy a narrow frontier zone, a token force, token occupation. When Germany declined to agree or to refer the legality of the issue to the

International Court at the Hague, Eden sent Hitler a questionnaire, a long series of questions, asking him to clarify his intentions. This the Fuehrer disposed of by allowing it to remain on the table.

One satisfaction France was given—Anglo-French staff talks were to be held. Flandin rejoiced to think that he had obtained this measure of support. It was the first formal commitment on the Continent that Britain had entered into since the war. Only Flandin's persistence and Eden's emphatic backing forced this concession from a reluctant Cabinet.

The Foreign Secretary had difficulty in persuading his fellow Ministers to agree that staff conversations should take place. He had next to secure approval from a House that was coldly dubious, even suspicious, of the commitments that had been entered into. Eden delivered a most convincing speech. "Anthony," conceded Neville Chamberlain, "made the speech of his life and it was not only a good speech. It showed both courage and statesmanship."

Eden began by reminding Members that Britain, under the Locarno Pact, was pledged in case of aggression to render aid to Belgium and France. We were not uncommitted and free arbiters. We were guarantors under the Treaty with obligations imposed upon us. "I am not," Eden declared, "and I want in all bluntness to make this plain—I am not prepared to be the first British Foreign Secretary to go back on a British signature."

The French, to whom we were bound by our Locarno commitments, had not been prepared to enter into further negotiations with the Germans unless the Rhineland were evacuated. To secure that end they were prepared to resort to sanctions. Instead, the British Government sought constructive contributions from the Germans as a preliminary to negotiations for new pacts for Europe's peace. To meet the French case, the Government had agreed to staff talks with the French and Belgians.

Eden was at pains to show the limited nature of the intended talks. They would be confined to purely technical military questions. In no measure would they increase our political obligations. They would be limited by our obligations under Locarno, and would be purely defensive in their purpose.

Without explaining away the staff talks altogether, Eden could scarcely have gone farther in belittling their importance. He thought it necessary to reply to those who feared new British

entanglements in Europe, and to those who thought that we might become involved in a quarrel that was not ours. "The people of this country are determined that that shall not happen and that is the view of the Government. We agree with it entirely. Our obligations are world-wide obligations. They are the obligations of the League Covenant. We stand firm in support of them. We do not add, nor will we add one jot to those obligations except in the area covered by the Locarno Treaty. Let us make our position absolutely clear. We accept no obligations beyond those shared by the League except the obligations that devolve on us under Locarno."

The discussions with the French, from which our new commitment had emerged, were recommended to the House as the peaceful outcome of a crisis that had menaced Europe's peace. Few people in this country had realized the immense significance to France and Belgium of the demilitarized Rhineland zone. There had been latent dangers in the crisis that were not appreciated. The justification for the proposals to which Britain had agreed was that they had allayed the immediate prospects of steps that might have led to war.

In the final section of his speech Eden became eloquent in his appeal for support in the task to which he was addressing himself. A strengthened League of Nations, an ordered Europe, a greater confidence in which nations would rely less on arms and more on law and order—were those things impossible of achievement? These were issues transcending the limitations of party politics. When the whole future of civilization was at stake, who cared about party labels?

It was fantastic to suggest that Britain was tied to the chariot wheels of this or that foreign country. "We cannot ensure peace unless in this country and elsewhere we divest ourselves of prejudices about this or that foreign nation. I would like to say to France that we cannot ensure peace unless the French Government is ready to approach with an open mind the problems which still separate it from Germany. I would like to say to Germany: How can we hope to enter on negotiations unless you are prepared to allay the anxieties in Europe which you have created?"

The Minister's case for the endorsement of staff conversations was supported by Winston Churchill and Austen Chamberlain. Free from the restraints of office, they could use language denied to

Eden. With a vision ranging into the future, Winston could forecast the strategic consequences of the Rhineland coup. The fortifications would change the whole aspect of affairs in Central Europe, in Poland and the Balkans.

Austen Chamberlain could see with equal penetration into the menaces of the future. The independence of Austria was the key position. Were Austria to perish, Czechoslovakia would become indefensible. Then the whole of the Balkans would be submitted to a gigantic new influence. Then the old German dream of a Central Europe ruled by and subject to Berlin would become a reality from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, with incalculable consequences not only for our country but for the whole of our Empire.

To these considerations the Cabinet turned a vision as dim as Nelson's blind eye. If they saw, they did not act, neither did they warn and begin to rouse public opinion against Hitlerism. Instead the path of conciliation was to be pursued and negotiations for new pacts started with the Fuehrer who could tear up treaties with the ease of scraps of paper in a closet.

Hitler had followed the example of Mussolini. He had proved himself a better judge than his Generals. With little strength to back his bluff he had scored over the democracies. He drew conclusions as to what he might be able to achieve when he could put might behind his words.

Vast consequences were to flow from this. The transformation of the world scene, the regroupings, the entire range of problems with which Eden was to be faced in his later years at the Foreign Office, had their origin in the event in the Rhineland. For the fumblings and hesitations of those days Eden must bear his measure of responsibility, the collective responsibility of a member of the Cabinet. He had the further individual responsibility of the head of the Foreign Office. On the two issues of the time, stronger action by the League over Abyssinia and support for the French over the Rhineland, he showed himself to be sounder in judgment than his Cabinet colleagues. But he was not able to enforce his opinions upon them, nor did his differences with them weigh so heavily as to require him to resign his office.

The problem of Italy remained. When reoccupation of the Rhineland had turned attention away from Geneva, the imposing

of a petrol embargo on Italy had been under discussion. When April came Haile Selassie and his army were nearing defeat. By mid-April the Emperor's headquarters had been taken.

The Geneva discussions proceeded. The French were in favour of calling off sanctions. Eden was prepared, even at that stage, to extend them. The Italians, he said, had intensified their aggression. In the British view it was intolerable that they should speak at Geneva of conciliation while the war continued. There must be real conciliation, otherwise the Sanctions Committee would again have to consider its task.

Eden was still endeavouring to save something from the wreck of the League and collective security. The Cabinet were prepared for the extension of sanctions, although Baldwin conceded that without a blockade in force, sanctions could scarcely be effective to arrest the Italians, and a blockade could not be agreed to inside the League.

Early in May, Addis Ababa was occupied. The Emperor fled from his dominions to find refuge in England. Mussolini proclaimed Abyssinia to be placed under the sovereignty of the King of Italy. What ground for sanctions remained? Even pro-League opinion began to waver. Austen Chamberlain roundly declared that to continue sanctions was a policy of equal danger and futility. Winston Churchill agreed. Samuel Hoare, about to return to Government office, felt that his forebodings had been realized only too tragically.

The French, now led by Léon Blum, head of a new Government of the Left, were in favour of an early settlement in Italy. There was the future to consider. Could the Stresa front be reformed?

At this stage, Eden was approached by Grandi, Italian Ambassador in London. He brought assurances that Mussolini had no designs on British interests in the Near East. This was received with restrained enthusiasm.

While the decision on sanctions was still deferred, Neville Chamberlain intervened with a calculated indiscretion. To members of the 1900 Club he spoke of the "midsummer madness" of continuing sanctions in force. He considered that the time had come to end a policy of drift. He had not consulted Eden before his speech, "because he would have begged of me not to say what

I proposed. . . . He has been very nice about it, though it is, of course, true that to some extent he has had to suffer in the public interest." That speech marked the end of the League's endeavours.

The Foreign Secretary himself made the formal announcement to the House (June 18). He had come to the conclusion, he said, that no purpose was to be served by continuing sanctions as a means of exerting pressure on Italy. The assumption on which sanctions had been based had not been borne out. One of the reasons was a miscalculation by military opinion in most countries that the conflict would have lasted much longer. Sanctions had not had time to produce deterrent results.

The announcement was badly received by the Opposition. From pacifist members there were cries of "Shame!" "Resign!" and "Sabotage!".

When Gallacher, the Communist, charged him with the responsibility for running away, Eden replied by enumerating what the British Government had done at Geneva. Many times a lead had been given by Britain: not once had a lead been given by any other state. It was by British insistence that the Abyssinian dispute was brought within the jurisdiction of the League Council. It was British action, challenged by Italy, that established the authority of the Council to follow the dispute. It was the British lead that had resulted in collective action being taken for the first time in the League history. It was the British lead that had resulted in the League machinery by which collective action was organized.

British action—Eden could enumerate the examples with the pride of a man recalling his own achievements, for it was largely his work, the results of his own influence with his fellow Ministers at home and his fellow delegates at Geneva.

Despite that present failure the Government were determined that the League should go on. This was met by interruptions from the Socialists and cries of "Where?" "Which way?" Eden continued unperturbed with his statement. If in future the League were to have a chance of success then the lessons of Abyssinia must be applied. The Government, in consultation with the Dominions, would consider the shortcomings, weaknesses, even dangers, in the structure of the League that experience had revealed.

A few days later Eden rose from his place in the Assembly of the League of Nations to make the formal proposition for the lifting

of sanctions. It was an unpalatable task. A year's labours had been brought to nought.

The proceedings were made the more melancholy by the appearance of Haile Selassie before the Assembly. "What," he asked, "has become of your promises to me? God and history will remember." Other states, noting the facts, drew the appropriate conclusion. It was put into words by de Valera. "Is there any small nation represented here," he asked, "which does not feel the truth of the warning that what is Ethiopia's fate to-day may well be its own fate to-morrow?"

Formal protest was offered on behalf of the Union of South Africa that fifty nations, led by three of the most powerful states of the world, had been powerless to save their weak member from destruction. It would shatter international confidence and all hope of realizing world peace.

Having been so closely identified with the work of Geneva, Eden could not escape some loss in prestige over the failure of the League's intervention. Opponents of the League sought to make him bear the odium of failure, as a Government scapegoat. It was even reported that his dismissal was contemplated. It was a palpable and odious invention. At no time had the Foreign Secretary been seriously at variance with his Cabinet colleagues. He continued to retain the trust of the Prime Minister and there was no reason why his confidence should have been forfeited. Eden had acted in harmony with Baldwin and his colleagues. The League policy was their policy, or at least of the majority of them.

Outside the circle of the Cabinet, opinion was deeply stirred. Ministers might still urge the continuance of the League. Electors, with keener realism, gave up the faith they had placed in it. If the League could not assure the collective security attributed to it, then what purpose did it serve? If it was no more than humbug, neither collective nor secure, then let it end.

With shrewd realism the lesser states of Europe revised their outlook. From Scandinavia to Spain interest in the League evaporated. Following closely on France's inaction over the Rhineland, the League's failure speeded up the collapse of the French system of alliances, the *cordon sanitaire* around Germany.

Finally came the rapprochement between Italy and Germany. In 1934, after the Dollfuss murder, when Mussolini sent his divisions

towards the Brenner for the protection of Austria, the two dictators looked on each other with scarcely concealed dislike and mistrust. The Duce was contemptuous of his brother dictator of Berlin. Anti-German feeling ran high in Italy. The Abyssinian episode detached the Duce from the Western democracies. War in Spain completed what Abyssinia had begun. The Duce ganged up with the Fuehrer.

CHAPTER VIII

WAR IN SPAIN

LITTLE breathing space was afforded between the winding-up of the Abyssinian episode and the opening of the next development to add to the anxieties of Europe and perplexities of Foreign Ministers. The war in Spain was to be Eden's major problem in the months ahead. It was to provide the occasion that was to terminate his first period of office as Foreign Secretary.

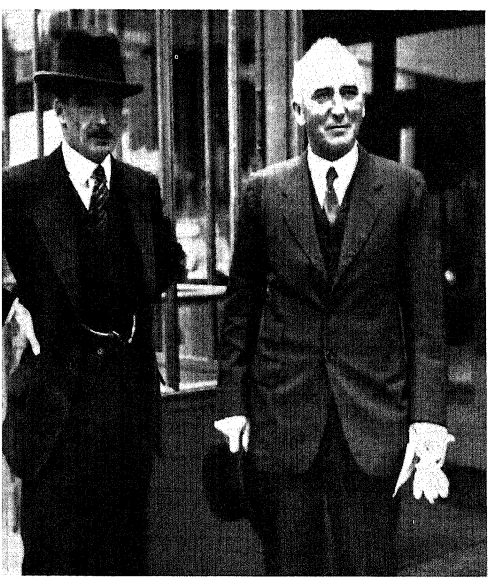
Civil war broke out in Spain on July 18, 1936. Armed revolt had been organized by the Right Wing parties against the government of the Left. Mussolini, seeking to advance his position in the Mediterranean, gave his backing to the insurgents. The generals behind the revolt expected to triumph in a brief coup. There was no such facile success. Fighting developed into full scale civil war.

For the outside world the issues were simplified by labelling the insurgents "Fascists" and the Government forces "Reds". Italian support for the insurrectionists was not disguised. In France, the Left Wing Government of Blum was inclined by political sympathy towards the "Reds". Hitler saw the opportunity for gaining Mussolini's goodwill and added his support to the Italians. The Soviet Government could not hold aloof from this battle of the ideologies. Troops and arms, technicians and advisers drawn from the various countries were engaged. A miniature prelude to the war to come was shortly in progress in the Spanish peninsula. Were intervention from outside to increase, Civil War in Spain must then have developed into a war of Europe.

Eden's diplomacy was directed from the outset to localizing the conflict. His object was first to prevent the conflict from spreading beyond the borders of Spain and second to preserve, whatever might be the final outcome of the struggle, Spain's territorial integrity.

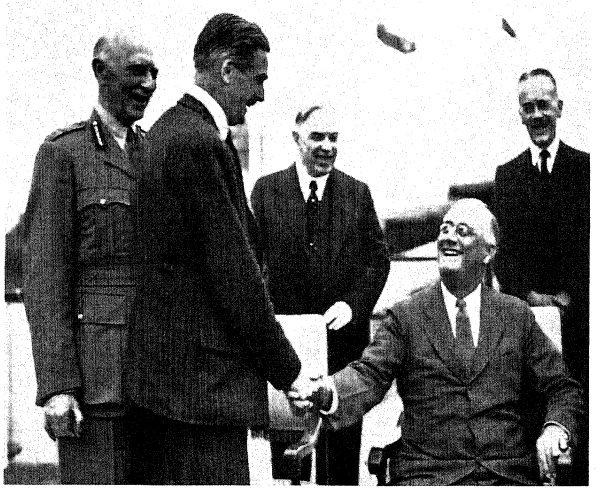
It was the French Government that first proposed the policy of organized abstention that came to be known as non-intervention.

With Sir Samuel Hoare (Lord Templewood) then Foreign Secretary during the Abyssinia Crisis in 1935



Accompanying Sir John Simon during a League of Nations Assembly at Geneva

Standing beside the Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, with General Wavell, in 1942



President Roosevelt's greeting on his arrival at the Quebec Conference in 1943. *In uniform is the Earl of Athlone, Governor-General of Canada*

Eden immediately gave the proposal his vigorous support. Within a week the Italians, the Germans and the Russians had agreed to co-operate. An embargo on the export of arms to Spain was agreed to. By the end of August, the states of Europe had formally committed themselves to non-intervention—at least in words. There were leakages, breaches of the undertakings given. A committee was set up with its headquarters in London to supervise the arrangements. Complaints were made on both sides and it was not to be disguised that non-intervention was "more honoured in the breach than the observance". As a check to evasions, a scheme of patrols and controls was worked out by the British and French.

Eden strove to blanket the Spanish fires. So long as the fighting could be contained within Spanish borders he was prepared to accept the victory of either side. To intervene, he asserted, would be bad humanity and bad politics. Churchill supported him. At all costs Britain must keep out of "this dismal welter".

There were protests in the House from the Socialists. Their sympathies were with the Spanish Government forces. The flagrant evasions of non-intervention by Germany and Italy were vigorously denounced. Supporters of the Franco insurrectionists, with equal force and no less justice, denounced the evasions of the Russians and the French. There were sharp exchanges in the House and feelings mounted as Franco gained ground.

The Socialists changed their minds about non-intervention. It was, they declared, working for Franco. The Government, they declared, wanted the Spanish Fascists to win. The farce of non-intervention should be ended.

Eden was unwavering. The effect of non-intervention on the combatants within Spain was a minor concern. He ignored it and kept his attention fixed firmly on his ultimate and major purpose—to prevent hostilities from spreading. It was true that non-intervention was not working as well as could be wished. There had been grave breaches of the agreement, but that was no reason for abandoning the principle.

"Those who advocate its abandonment must face the alternative. It is immeasurably grave. M. Blum has spoken of his conviction that non-intervention saved a European war last August. I for one am not prepared to disagree."

This was the reiterated substance of a dozen of speeches. The

only alternative to non-intervention was active intervention and for that no party was prepared. When at last the fighting was over the Spanish people would like best those who had fought least on either side. They would feel scant gratitude for those who had killed fellow Spaniards. They would best understand the motives of the nation that had confined its intervention to the saving of thousands of Spanish lives.

Whatever success non-intervention might achieve abroad, at home it could not blanket out the sparks of politics. Party feelings were exacerbated. Eden began to lose some of the goodwill that had persisted among Opposition members. He was heartened by the messages of appreciation he received from abroad. The United States Government had issued a message of sympathetic support for the endeavours of the Non-Intervention Committee. It was an encouragement to persevere.

New strains and stresses were everywhere developing. The apathy of Britain's years of pacifism was beginning to pass. The Spanish war was accentuating differences, rousing feelings that had been dormant. British re-armament was producing slow results. There were stirrings of a new spirit, with a more forcible note, that found expression in the Foreign Secretary's speeches. He lost no opportunity of emphasizing the essential peacefulness of Britain, but he began to dwell more on other aspects of Government policy.

If our ideals were to prevail in a re-arming world we must see to it that we were strong. Attempts to uphold international law had not benefited from the comparative decline of British strength in arms. The equilibrium must be restored. We preferred butter to guns, but other nations did not, and were sacrificing their standard of living to the standard of arms.

Looking out from his desk in Whitehall, the Foreign Minister saw a continent that was re-arming steadily, feverishly. Marching men had once again become a feature of the landscape and to that was added the new menace of great squadrons of the air. These things might be the token of man's folly, but they could not be ignored. He did not believe in the inevitability of catastrophe, but he knew that the future peace of Europe depended upon the part that Britain could play. The strength of British armaments was of paramount importance to the preservation of peace.

The tendency was growing to divide Europe into two opposing

camps according to the two extreme political doctrines. This was deplorable. The doctrine of the class war had never been accepted by the British people because they were practical enough to see that it made no sense. To divide nations according to political creeds was equally false. Democracy had been assailed because it was not heroic and Europe, we were told, was entering upon an heroic age. "By all means," he told members of the Foreign Press, "let us have heroism, but let us regard Europe as a land for heroes to live in, not merely to die in. Let us not confuse heroism and heroics."

In a world in which national prestige was worshipped as a golden calf, he urged that we should take as the standard of our own prestige as a nation our ability to combine tolerance and freedom with strong and effective government. "Democracy comes near to dictatorship," he declared at the Cutlers' Feast, "when the will of the majority is imposed in a spirit of intolerance on the minority. British democracy should see to it that the majority secures for the minority proper scope and conditions of life."

Eden's outlook had broadened with his experience. His technique as a speaker had matured. He could not be compared with Churchill in his rhetorical strength, or with Baldwin in his musings. But he could address the plain man in the plain man's words. He spoke less in the language of platitude, and dropped less frequently into bathos. There was an occasional phrase to add point to his argument.

It was notable that in times that were growing cynically indifferent to moral issues he should have insisted on the continuing validity of moral values. For some of his hearers there was a quaintly old-fashioned ring about this intrusion of right and wrong into the international sphere. The belief that the moral as well as the political weight of Britain should be brought to bear in affairs was not one that would have found general expression amongst his colleagues. He held that effort must be made to convince the world that power politics did not pay, that there must be a moral basis for policy.

His colleagues, becoming aware of his moral earnestness, were slightly disconcerted. It marked a difference between him and the pragmatical minds that were ascendant in the Cabinet councils. It marked a difference in his approach to Europe's problems. Thus,

on the war in Spain, his personal feelings were against dictator-supported Franco. This was little suspected by Opposition members, who reproached him for pursuing a policy that was contributing to the success of Franco.

Even Hoare, with his Quaker associations, did not share his feelings. "I formed the impression when I was first Lord," he testifies, "that Eden regarded the conflict in Spain as one between absolute right and absolute wrong, in which the Dictator should at all costs be defeated and democracy defended. This almost passionate feeling, which was fully shared by his intimate friends, differed from my own view."

It is a glimpse of a facet of the man that has not been exposed to the public eye. "This almost passionate feeling"—it is an element in Eden's nature whose existence could not generally be deduced from his speeches. He has lacked that capacity for the expression of his more intimate feelings with which Baldwin was so well endowed. Rarely in Eden's speeches is the personal note to be detected. On almost every subject with which he has dealt he has been aloof, detached, making speeches from his brain, rarely from his emotions. The blanket of non-intervention has been rigorously imposed on his personal convictions. It has produced a wrong impression of the man. Only occasionally have there been glimpses of the eager temperament, the warm-hearted sympathies and the convictions that glow beneath the poise and assurance of the practised speaker.

The continuance of the Spanish war was disturbing for Mussolini. He had been disappointed in his hopes of an easy Franco victory, to which he had committed himself. His prestige was at stake. The longer the war went on, the greater grew his need for German assistance. The Duce's failure worked for Hitler's ends. Italy, separated further from France and Britain, was drawn towards Germany. The dictators met first at Munich, then in Berlin. Mussolini agreed to join the German-Japanese anti-Communist Pact. The Rome-Berlin Axis came into being.

The line-up of the dictators might have been expected to give a new sense of urgency to the need for British re-armament. With the formation of the Axis the democratic powers might have drawn closer together. With curious disdain, British Ministers continued to pursue the line they had been following. The dictators

might seek to divide Europe into armed blocs. Britain, true to her democratic way of life, would be no party to any such associations. Opinion remained critical of the French and intensely suspicious of any suggestion of British entanglements.

So strong was this feeling that Eden was forced to make a public disavowal. He was suspected in some quarters of having entered into a hidden treaty with the French. The terms of the speech he made at Leamington on the purposes of British disarmament, coupled with a statement by the French Foreign Minister, M. Delbos, were held to have given colour to those suspicions. He considered it necessary to give a public explanation and denial.

It was not the case, he said, that there was some new alliance. "Neither M. Delbos's statement nor mine represents any new departure, nor do they conceal any intention to form any exclusive alliance, nor do they suggest a policy of blocs. Let me emphasize once again it is not in our minds, nor, I am convinced, is it in the minds of the French Government, to seek to come to any exclusive arrangement. Far from it—we desire and should cordially welcome the co-operation of Germany, not only in a Western agreement but in European affairs generally."

Here plainly indicated was one of the continuing problems of Eden's term at the Foreign Office. As a protégé of Austen Chamberlain his sympathies were with the French. He shared their anxieties about the future and he would have moved closer towards them. His Cabinet colleagues, in the majority, were inclined to Germany and therein they and not the Foreign Secretary were the interpreters of national feeling.

The tide of opinion flowed in the Thirties against Eden in the course he would have chosen. Unlike the dictator, the democratic minister may not override public opinion. It is not always that he has the time, or the power, to educate it. He can do no more than strike an uneasy and varying compromise between the wishes of the people and the guide of his own wisdom. Then he is told that his policy lacks precision and is full of drift.

"Such criticisms," Eden said on one occasion, "seem to ignore certain fundamental truths. To paraphrase a saying of Lord Kitchener's quoted in the third volume of Winston Churchill's great life of Marlborough: 'One cannot conduct foreign affairs as one would, but only as one can.' " It is the Foreign Secretary's lament

from age to age. He used the words of his predecessor Edward Grey to voice another regret: "Foreign Office things are always in a mess; they are not as if one were doing constructive work or writing a book or a lecture, or reading up a subject, and they can never be put aside for a day."

During the latter months of 1936 little progress was made in negotiations with Germany. British Ministers were not dissatisfied: they were playing for time while re-armament went slowly forward. Hitler was not less satisfied: German arming went ahead. Guns came faster than butter from democratic dairies.

The Foreign Secretary pushed on with his plans for the convening of a Five Power Conference to negotiate agreements to take the place of Locarno. Germany's co-operation was sought in the economic sphere.

With Italy there was no prospect of mending the broken friendship. Mussolini in his role of a lord of the Mediterranean (Protector, also, of Islam) had spoken in a belittling sense of Britain's interest in the Mediterranean—"a short cut by which she reaches more quickly her outlying territories". Eden made a sharp riposte in the House.

"The implication that freedom to come and go in the Mediterranean is for this country a convenience rather than a vital interest is one," he said, "that does not fully describe our interests. For us the Mediterranean is not a short cut but a main arterial road. Freedom of communication in these waters is a vital interest, in the full sense of the word, to the British Commonwealth. In years gone by British and Italian interests in the Mediterranean have been complementary rather than divergent. On our part there is every desire that those relations should be preserved in the future. We take note of and welcome the assurance that Signor Mussolini does not mean to threaten this route nor propose to interrupt it. Nor do we." There was an admonition not to be mistaken in that terse phrase "Nor do we."

Reform of the League of Nations was under consideration. Eden did not associate himself with those quarters in which it was fashionable to sneer at the League. The League was no perfect instrument; to pretend that it was such, was to live in a fool's paradise. In two important respects reform was needed. The first was to enable the League to take action at the earliest moment in

any given dispute. For this reason amendment was essential of the unanimity rule, under which any single nation could prevent any action being taken. The second change needed was to meet the criticism and the German objection, that the League was devoted exclusively to the maintenance of the *status quo* in Europe.

Eden had the satisfaction of putting his signature to a new Treaty of Alliance which, after months of patient negotiation, was at last agreed to with the Government of Egypt. Nahas Pasha attended at the Foreign Office (August 26, 1936) to append his signature on behalf of the Egyptians.

This Treaty was the instrument governing relations between the two countries during the critical period of the second war. At a later stage Eden was to take part in new and more difficult discussions for the conclusion of an agreement to take the place of what was then signed. Expressing his happiness at the conclusion of the Treaty he said that it was the result of the growing conviction in both countries that their interests were inseparably linked. "I have seen it said," he added, "that this marks the end of an epoch in Anglo-Egyptian relations. I would prefer to regard it as the beginning of a new phase." And such it proved to be.

During the closing weeks of the year 1936 public attention was diverted from the Continent to affairs at home and the position of the King. The Foreign Secretary took no leading part in the events of the abdication of King Edward the Eighth. His public references to the crisis were few and brief. He confessed, after the abdication, to a feeling of profound sympathy for the man who had been King, expressing at the same time a welcome of loyal affection to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

In 1937 came the Coronation and its attendant festivities. The crowning accomplished, Stanley Baldwin resigned the Premiership, exhausted by the strain of the abdication, in which he had given the final display of his statesmanlike handling of great affairs on which he chose to bring his qualities to bear. "I have had my hour, I pass soon into the shade," were the words of his valedictory address to youth of the Empire. Baldwin passed to the House of Lords. His public career ended in "a cloudless glow of praise and gratitude". A little while and that glory would have faded. The generation he had served after his fashion would seek to heap on him all the responsibilities for neglect to meet the menace of Hitlerism.

A culprit was needed for the omissions of a nation and of its leaders. Baldwin was chosen as the scapegoat.

With the succession of Neville Chamberlain to the Premiership, a new phase was begun, the last before the opening of the war it had been the aim of British statesmanship to avert. It was a time of trial and tribulation for Anthony Eden.

CHAPTER IX

DIFFERENCES WITH CHAMBERLAIN

DURING the ten months he served as Foreign Secretary under Neville Chamberlain, Eden found himself to be increasingly at variance with the purpose and methods of the new Prime Minister. Finally he was driven to resign office, the first Minister to part company with Chamberlain as he pursued his course as apostle of appeasement.

Differences in temperament and outlook and in that sum of opinions that we term a man's political philosophy suggested that the Foreign Secretary would not work as easily with Chamberlain as under his predecessor. There was a bond of sympathy that made for harmony between Eden and Baldwin. In time they were a generation apart, but there was something of a similarity in their approach to politics. It arose, perhaps, from the influences of public school and university on characters that were not dissimilar. Each man tended to apply moral values to political problems. Both were moved by a sense of idealism that is not general among politicians. Over a couple of decades Baldwin, least partisan of Tory Prime Ministers, had given a tone to public life that promoted goodwill. He had smoothed away the harsher discords of politics and the worst futilities of the class war.

The scapegoat who has been saddled with the blame for Britain's weakness in her hour of need served his country better than his detractors have allowed. I feel myself to be under no obligation to cancel the phrase I applied to him twenty years ago—"the greatest peace-time Prime Minister since Walpole". He contributed to that unity of spirit with which the people faced the supreme crisis of 1940. It was his achievement, throughout the years, to have softened the acerbities that embittered politics abroad and made for divisions and strife on the Continent, in Germany, in France, in Spain and in Italy. Abroad there was the bitterness of antagonized classes. Here, largely because of Baldwin, harmony was preserved. The unity that springs from harmony was his contribution to the

national preparedness for war, and who of his detractors are prepared to say that the material preparedness of Germany under Hitler counted in the final reckoning more than the spiritual preparedness of which Stanley Baldwin was the political stimulus in Britain? Anthony Eden could not have achieved the eloquence of the "Give peace in our time" speech that moved the House to a degree few men have ever achieved, but the same purpose has been behind the labours of his career.

With Chamberlain there was a change that extended beyond politics. He, too, was to dedicate himself to the service of the cause of peace, but though he strove for peace he did not inspire it. He would, says his biographer, impart an edge to every question. He had an astringent effect, says Hoare, who served under him, upon opinions and preferences. He could rouse the partisans behind him, but he had not the touch to carry his appeal over to the opposition benches, to the men and women of the parties other than his own. He lacked the breadth of mind and the wide humanity that, with all his shortcomings, distinguished Baldwin.

Neville Chamberlain was of lesser calibre than the Premiers of his time. Asquith, Lloyd George, Churchill—there was greatness about these. Chamberlain had shrewdness, efficiency, industry and the approach of the business man in politics. He had the decisiveness that Baldwin lacked. He had the confidence in his own judgment of the self-opinionated man. He had gained his first experience of affairs in Birmingham, Radical Joe's civic citadel. Only in his later years had he had contact with the wider affairs. The limitations of his knowledge in no way affected the certainty of his convictions. The easy-going indolence of his predecessor was replaced by the sharp discipline of the martinet.

In no department was the change of leadership more apparent than at the Foreign Office. Under Baldwin, who neither liked foreign affairs, nor gave much of his time to understanding them, the Foreign Secretary had conducted his business and followed his line of policy in association with the Cabinet. Chamberlain came in with the intention formed of directing the conduct of foreign affairs.

The Foreign Office has been recognized as a department that is the special concern of the head of the government. Some Premiers, Salisbury and MacDonald of recent years, have themselves filled

both offices. Having become accustomed to conducting matters with a fairly free hand, Eden had now to accustom himself to the supervision of his leader. Nor was the position made easier for him by the fact that his two immediate predecessors at the Foreign Office were the intimate advisers of the Prime Minister.

Hoare and Simon, to whom Halifax came to be added, formed with Chamberlain the inner circle of the Cabinet. In Simon, the Prime Minister found a critical brain of the first order. On the judgment of Halifax he came to rely. By instinct and training Hoare was in accord with his ideas. These men were guided by practical common-sense rather than idealism, sympathized with Germany rather than France, were not guided in their approach to world affairs by Eden's consciousness of absolute right and wrong, but were ready to move step by step as opportunity afforded to reach accommodation with the dictators. It was by a gradual process that these influences made themselves felt, but they ensured that ultimately there must come a clash between pragmatical realism and liberal-minded idealism. Chamberlain dedicated himself to the noblest of causes, but it has been questioned whether he was actuated by the noblest of motives. There are those who see in him not the idealist labouring for peace, but the vain man seeking the world's acclaim as the great pacificator of his age.

Chamberlain took over the reins with a clear-cut notion of what he wanted and a suspicion that with his Foreign Secretary he would encounter a lack of enthusiasm for his purpose. He believed that the double policy of rearmament and better relations with Germany and Italy would carry the country safely through the danger period —"If only the Foreign Office would play up." With such initial mistrust it was natural that he should wish to make changes, but that would take time. With a sense of urgency about his task he valued time like a general, a general campaigning for peace.

Grandi called to inform Eden that he had a message from his master to the Prime Minister. Once contact had been made, Chamberlain continued the discussions outside the Foreign Office. Twice the ambassador was received by the Prime Minister. On the second occasion, Chamberlain handed him a friendly letter for Mussolini. The Prime Minister had preferred not to consult the Foreign Secretary over the terms, and did not show him the letter "for I had the feeling he would object to it". There is a sign of

weakness here, and something out of keeping with the character of a straightforward man. "Nevertheless," Neville recorded in his diary with some show of relief, "nevertheless Anthony made no complaint."

Later, Chamberlain was to lament that it was Eden who was then at the Foreign Office. He was to be filled with regrets at the thought of an opportunity that was lost and he sighed at the thought "If I had had Halifax at the Foreign Office instead of Anthony at the time I wrote my letter to Mussolini."

However, he could persuade himself that the preliminaries had passed off reasonably well. He had conveyed to the Duce his will for friendliness and a return to the atmosphere of the Gentlemen's Agreement. Mussolini was accommodating in his reply. Conscious of the value to be placed on Italian support, he was ready to cash in on any advantage to be gained. Recognition of his conquests in Abyssinia was his immediate aim. Chamberlain was not unresponsive, but insisted that recognition must be part of a comprehensive agreement and the end of Anti-British propaganda.

While these discussions were proceeding, there was an unorthodox approach towards Hitler. Nevile Henderson, newly appointed to the Berlin embassy, had foreshadowed a more conciliatory British line. In a public speech he had referred to the "great social experiment" in Germany, which sounded complimentary by comparison with the terms currently applied to Hitlerism. Chamberlain followed up by inviting the German Foreign Minister to London.

At this point incidents in the Spanish war clouded the brightening prospects. Merchant ships in Spanish waters were sunk by submarines that could not be other than Italian. There was an immediate outcry against Mediterranean piracy. Hitler added to the tension by complaints about German warships being made the object of Red target practice. Following the loss of many British cargoes, an Italian torpedo was fired at the destroyer *Havoc*. There was an urgent new problem in non-intervention.

A conference of Mediterranean Powers was summoned to meet at the Swiss town of Nyon, not far from Geneva. Neither Italy nor Germany would take part. Eden entered on the discussions with a heartening message of support from Winston Churchill, whom he had been meeting on social terms on the Riviera. He was further

encouraged by the co-operation of the French, represented by Delbos. How different from the Laval days over Abyssinia. With Britain and France agreed, there was no difficulty in deciding on measures to stop the piratical sinkings. A naval and air patrol was established. Very shortly eighty destroyers of the two navies were sailing the blue waters, with scouting 'planes in the skies. The pirate submarines disappeared. There were no more sinkings.

It was a success for democracies, and a rebuff for Mussolini, who, as Eden said, had overstepped the mark and had to pay the penalty. The "masked highwaymen of the seas", who had not hesitated over manslaughter or murder, were checked. The naval police rooted out "gangster terrorism".

The Foreign Secretary was warmly praised, the Prime Minister adding his contribution of congratulations. But what of the consequences on the approaches to Mussolini? Was this the way to restore the Gentlemen's Agreement?

There were acid comments in the Italian Press, a renewal of the attacks on Eden. The submarine gangsters had been suppressed, but the political blackmailers were in action. "We seem to be back in the days of Baldwin when Eden was supreme master of foreign policy," one commentator stated. "With Eden at the head of the Foreign Office we must be on our guard," was another suggestive hint.

However admirable its effect might be at sea, the Nyon agreement was not a step in the direction the appeaser wished to follow. Chamberlain deplored the effect on Anglo-Italian relations: it could be so dangerous. A little later he was concerned about verbal exchanges that were not conducive to the atmosphere he was seeking. Mussolini might be more than usually insolent, but all the same "Anthony should never have been provoked into a retort which throws Italy and Germany together when our policy is so obviously to divide them."

These disturbing impressions must be removed. Halifax, in the Lords, pointed the way to better things, and the clearing away of misunderstandings that had arisen out of Spain. "I can myself look forward," Chamberlain wrote, "though I do not want to be unduly optimistic, to the gradual establishment of a new and healthier atmosphere in which it would be possible to reach the position where Anglo-Italian conversations might be held."

A few days later, in a public speech at Llandudno, Eden made references to Italy in which the soothing tones of conciliation were not conspicuous. Having reaffirmed his confidence in the course of non-intervention, he drew a distinction between non-intervention and indifference. Britain, he said, was not indifferent to complications that might arise in the Mediterranean as the result of the intervention of others in Spain. Piracy was an example. The Nyon agreement had put an end to conditions that had become intolerable. We should continue to be watchful. Since the Nyon Conference, discussions had been proceeding to make non-intervention in Spain effective and a reality. The Italians had not been able to agree to proposals made by the British and French Governments. The Government would regret a breakdown, but were not prepared indefinitely to acquiesce in dilatory tactics and evasions of non-intervention.

"A feature of the present situation," Eden added, "is proclaimed intervention, the glorification of breaches of the agreement. In such conditions no one can complain if the patience of those who have striven to keep their responsibilities towards Europe constantly before them is well-nigh exhausted. I, for one, should certainly not be prepared to utter criticism of any nation which, if such conditions continue, felt compelled to resume its freedom of action. I am as anxious as anybody to remove disagreements with Germany and Italy or any other country, but we must make sure that in trying to improve the situation in one direction it does not deteriorate in another. I have often said we have no intention of making exclusive friendships with other countries, and that we cannot lend ourselves to a policy which in order to include some must exclude others."

This was plain speaking. Having shown at Nyon that Mussolini could not stand up to the Anglo-French combination working harmoniously, Eden was pressing home his advantage. But it was scarcely consonant with the realization of the hopes Halifax had guardedly expressed.

Lloyd George noted the difference in ministerial emphasis. He pictured Eden as the first-class chauffeur and behind him an assembly of nervous wrecks pulling at his elbow. "I have been watching the thing," Lloyd George remarked. "Eden obviously knows his own mind. I can see that he is not having his own way in the matter."

Eden was concerned not so much with the lack of progress with Mussolini as with the lack of drive behind the arms programme. Looking out from the Foreign Office windows on the European scene, he was impressed by anxieties of the time of storm and challenge. "Obligations are ignored, engagements cynically torn up, confidence shaken, methods of making war without declaring war, while at the same time each nation declares that its one desire is peace. In all this confusion, amidst all the horrors, national unity and strength are the essential need."

To this period belongs the incident reported by Winston Churchill. Increasingly concerned about our tardy progress in re-arming, Eden had an interview with Neville Chamberlain. He tried to convey his misgivings. The Prime Minister refused to hear him out. "Go home and take an aspirin," was Chamberlain's advice.

"If only the Foreign Office will play." As he pursued the path of appeasement Chamberlain must have felt a recurrence of his doubts. Men who have spent years of their professional lives studying the international scene cannot suppress their views of affairs. The man in a hurry to produce a settlement of Europe's problems grew impatient over the complexities of the machinery of the foreign department. Simplifying the issues in his mind, he needed a simplification of the machine, with the controls in his own hands. It is one of those ironies that give a piquancy to the chronicles that Neville Chamberlain should have come to adopt the methods of Lloyd George in his later days in short-circuiting the Foreign Office and its head. Chamberlain had spent fifteen years in opposing the return to ministerial office of Lloyd George, the man whom above all others in public life he disliked and whose methods he deplored. Nevertheless, within a short period of taking over, Chamberlain had re-created in embryo the system of the Foreign Office annexe, the "suburb" in the garden of Number Ten that had so troubled Curzon, serving under Lloyd George.

Changes had recently been made in the Foreign Office personnel. Vansittart, the permanent head of the department, so wise over Germany, was considered to have compromised himself over the Hoare-Laval pact. He was relieved of his post under the semblance of promotion as Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the Government, a place of honour without authority. Alexander

Cadogan succeeded him. Under Chamberlain an additional civil servant was intruded in the conduct of affairs. Horace Wilson had won the respect of two Prime Ministers as an outstanding administrator. Chamberlain had benefited from his assistance both at the Ministry of Health and the Treasury. Now he was installed at Number Ten as head of the secretariat, and was assigned an office next to the Cabinet room. The chief industrial adviser to the Government had become the Prime Minister's supplementary adviser on foreign questions. Chief and adviser had this in common, that they could approach world affairs with minds uninhibited by the influences of careers devoted to the mysteries of diplomacy. Dyarchy in the conduct of Foreign Affairs had taken a new, an amateur turn.

The next intrusion was the appearance of the Master of Foxhounds as envoy to Hitler. Goering had organized a hunting exhibition which Halifax received an invitation to attend in his capacity of Master of the Middleton. The Prime Minister saw here a chance for getting on personal terms with the Fuehrer.

The arrangements for the trip were made with some appearance of mystery. Eden at that time was attending at Brussels the Nine-Power Conference on the Far East. Halifax was temporarily in charge of the Foreign Office. The news of his plan to go on a hunting expedition to Germany first emerged in a garbled newspaper report. It was easy to jump to the conclusion that things were being fixed behind Eden's back and the jump was quickly made. One American correspondent went so far as to cable home that there had been a first-class row amongst Ministers, that Eden had offered his resignation and that Chamberlain had, with difficulty, persuaded him to stay on. Appearances were made to support the conjecture, for Eden broke off his discussions at Brussels to confer with Chamberlain and Halifax.

Speculation on the interesting subject of the future of the Foreign Office died away when Halifax, on his return, conferred with Eden, who was present when the report was made to the Prime Minister on the hunting-cum-diplomacy expedition. Chamberlain was highly satisfied. Halifax had established contact with Hitler—that was the essential fact. It contributed to the atmosphere that was necessary for discussions with Germany that might lead to a settlement. Now they knew pretty well what Hitler wanted—Austria, Czechoslovakia in its German populated parts and the return of the

Colonies in Africa. If he would be reasonable in his methods a deal might be done, always providing that peaceful means were to be adopted.

As a sequel to the Halifax talks in Germany, the French Ministers came to London for an exchange of views. Eden was always happy when meeting friends from across the Channel. He could note with relish that they showed a contempt for Mussolini and his Italians that was not to Chamberlain's liking, but they raised no objection to Chamberlain pursuing his approaches to Italy.

As if to remind the others of his importance, the Duce chose at this stage to pull out of the League, that "tottering temple in which they do not work for peace but prepare for war". Anglo-Italian relations grew worse rather than better.

Chamberlain noted with dismay that the year was running to its close and no headway had been made. The Italians were pouring out anti-British propaganda from the radio. The Italian Press was hostile. Anti-British intrigues were stimulated in the Near East. The Rome-Berlin Axis was stronger. He told Eden he feared things would end in deadlock "if we stuck to it that we could not open conversations till the League had given us permission".

During December, Eden had further meetings with Grandi, but with little result. When it was suggested that recognition should be accorded to Italian conquests in Abyssinia, Eden replied that before any concessions were made, the Italians should prove their goodwill by calling off anti-British propaganda. Here was the cause of the delays against which Chamberlain was chafing. Halifax sided with the Prime Minister—let the talks begin, was his opinion, and then propaganda would cease.

CHAPTER X

THE WIDENING RIFT

HAVING wound up the business of 1937, Eden went south for a much-needed break. The Prime Minister took over the Foreign Office. During this interim period there occurred the incident of the rebuff to Roosevelt. It was the first major contribution to affairs to be placed to the credit of the new amateurs in diplomacy.

The month of January was nearly half spent. Eden was still in the South of France, restoring his strength. Messages reached him from his officials in the Foreign Office suggesting that developments had occurred that required his immediate return. On arrival at Dover he was met by Alexander Cadogan. By the time he reached London he was acquainted with the facts.

During his absence President Roosevelt had made a suggestion for intervention in the affairs of Europe. The Prime Minister, without so much as calling the Cabinet to consider it, had sent him a discouraging reply.

Eden was perturbed both on personal grounds and on the broader question of policy. It was impossible for him to ignore the fact that he had received no communication from the Prime Minister about the Roosevelt proposal. He was dismayed by the possible consequences in America of the terms in which Chamberlain had repulsed the President's suggestion.

Eden had never lost sight of the influence any British action might have on United States' opinion. He would allow nothing to lessen Roosevelt's sympathy for the democracies. He had followed with no detached interest the President's patient efforts to counteract American isolationism. As recently as the previous Autumn, Roosevelt had braved his opponents by calling for a boycott against aggressor states. The isolationists had shown their strength, but the President, master of the political craft, had continued in his course of awakening his fellow-countrymen to the responsibilities and danger of the United States in a dictator-menaced world.

What was the value to Britain of presidential interest and

sympathy? A generation that had witnessed decisive influence of American participation in the latter stages of the first war should have been unanimous on that point, but it was not so. Judgment is so often coloured by likes and dislikes that are more powerful in their pull than the voice of reason.

Here Eden saw with clear vision and Chamberlain, for all his sharp intelligence, was at fault. He had confided to his diary his belief that it was "always best and safest to count on nothing from the Americans but words". If Eden were inhibited by his personal dislike from dealing with Mussolini, Chamberlain was barred by his prejudices from making a proper evaluation of the place of America in the reckoning of affairs. Later he was to make a similar miscalculation over the Russians. It was something of an achievement to have undervalued both the great republics.

Roosevelt had for some months been pondering over intervention in Europe's affairs. On January 11, 1938, his under-Secretary of State called on the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Ronald Lindsay, with a confidential message for the Prime Minister. The President was frankly concerned over the worsening of the outlook in Europe. As a means of contributing to an easing of tension he was considering the summoning of a conference at Washington of the lesser States of Europe as a preliminary to approaches to the major powers. Before taking any action he wished to know what view the Prime Minister would take of such a step.

In forwarding this communication to London, Lindsay strongly urged that the President's proposal should be accepted. Failure to agree might have unfortunate results on the prospects of Anglo-American co-operation. It was clear that Roosevelt was eager to participate in a solution of Europe's troubles. He was, indeed, so attracted by the idea that he was prepared to ignore the cautionary advice of his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.

Eden, with his conception of the importance of American co-operation, would have been prompt to extend his support. The all-important consideration was that the United States would have been committed to participation in the affairs of Europe and, in the future reckoning, Hitler would have to take account of American opinion. What was there in Europe to be set against this? What greater force could have been enlisted on the side of the democracies?

Chamberlain's mind was not influenced by any such considerations. His thoughts were concentrated on his hopes for detaching the Duce from the Axis. Presidential intervention would, doubtless, cause new postponements. The apostle of appeasement was not to be deflected from his own schemes by suggestions from the White House.

Ronald Lindsay's telegram was received in the Foreign Office on January 12. The day following Chamberlain came to London. He lost no time over consultations, but sent his reply. The President had asked for an answer by January 17. Chamberlain replied on the 13th. He had not considered it necessary to inform the Foreign Secretary, or to consult his immediate advisers of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Not until the matter was settled and the reply sent did the majority of the Cabinet learn of the President's approach. Even accepting that the President had imposed a cast-iron, inflexible time-limit, five days had been available for consideration —time to have brought home the Foreign Secretary, to have consulted the Foreign Affairs Committee, to have summoned a full Cabinet meeting. Chamberlain ruled out consultation, not so much because he was high-handed as that he was small-minded, lacking in a sense of the importance of the occasion.

His reply was cordial in terms, but discouraging in purpose. He appreciated that the President had wished to receive his advice. But he was engaged on his own efforts to reach an agreement with Germany and Italy, in particular with Italy. Indeed, to promote friendly relations with Italy, Britain was prepared to go so far as to recognize the Italian occupation of Abyssinia. Would the President consider whether his new proposal might not cut across the Prime Minister's efforts? Would it not be better for the President to postpone what he had in mind?

He paid tribute to the President's "courageous initiative", praise that could scarcely offset the chilling nature of the negative response. To make the rebuff the more unpalatable was the disquieting suggestion of extending recognition to the fruits of Italian aggression, a point on which American opinion was most sensitive.

By the time Eden had returned to London, recalled by his agitated officials, the reply was gone beyond recall. All that could be done was to attempt to remove the worst impressions of the Prime Minister's letter. Lindsay was immediately sent a telegram of

explanation for the President's consideration. By then, Roosevelt had taken his decision. He would defer his plan. He added that he was gravely concerned over the according of recognition to the conquest of Abyssinia.

Cordell Hull, in outspoken terms, told the Ambassador that this would arouse feelings of disgust, and would be represented as "a corrupt bargain completed in Europe at the expense of interests in the Far East in which America was intimately concerned".

At this stage, the Foreign Affairs Committee gave consideration to the correspondence. Eden succeeded in imparting to its members something of his own disquiet. On his recommendation, further explanations were sent to Washington, particularly regarding the recognition question. A cordial reply was received. The President appreciated the Prime Minister's frank and friendly spirit. "I am willing to defer making the proposal," Roosevelt added.

A day or two later (January 21) Chamberlain telegraphed again. By this time the light had dawned. He had been made to appreciate the importance Roosevelt attached to the plan, and had become concerned not to disappoint him. In this changed mood, he suggested that there was no reason for postponement. If the President took the initiative the British Government would support him.

It had taken eight days to complete the adjustment of his ageing and self-opinionated mind to a proposition that had lain a little outside the range of his previous conceptions. It carried its own criticism of the first unfortunate rebuff.

Chamberlain's defenders have argued that he was hurried into sending his initial reply, but he had expended no more than 24 of the 150 hours available. He had declined to take time or counsel. He did not think it necessary, either as an advantage to himself or out of courtesy to his colleague, to summon home the Foreign Secretary for consultation. It is asserted by Lord Templewood that Eden's presence would have made no difference to the result—"I doubt whether our answer would have been substantially altered if he had been in London." It is difficult to accept this as a fact, or as a contribution to Chamberlain's defence. Eden's return was followed by a change of mind on Chamberlain's part, a fairly complete reversal of opinion. Presumably the Prime Minister's mind was not so far beyond the reach of the suggestions of others that Eden, on the spot, could not have assisted him in the first instance to the

conclusion to which, when the mischief had been done, Eden brought him.

For some weeks afterwards there were promptings from London and offers of co-operation in the presidential plan. At last came the final word, accompanied by an expression of warm appreciation of the Prime Minister's messages. As the plan had been indefinitely postponed "the opportunity would not recur".

Lord Templewood, in his account of these proceedings, in which as Sir Samuel Hoare he took a leading part, has pleaded that the incident had ended in friendly understanding and had caused no feelings of resentment on the part of the President. It may be so. But no loss of resentment is a poor outcome from an offer that would have brought the United States President into the position of assuming some responsibility for participation in the affairs of Europe. The consequences that might have flowed from this are incalculable.

Templewood has further contended that it was a valid objection that the President might not have been able to bring his purpose to success. Not the immediate results of the Roosevelt conference, but the fact that Roosevelt should have been seen by the world at large, and the dictators in particular, to have taken such an initiative was the matter of importance.

On the relations between the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister, the incident had immediate consequences. They had been in open disagreement. On this occasion, Eden's will had so far prevailed that Chamberlain had been induced to change his mind, but they had come within sight of the parting of the ways. Keith Feiling, in his biography of Chamberlain, records that the incident "thrust in the wedge" between the two men a little deeper. "While Chamberlain feared the dictators would pay no heed [to the Roosevelt Conference] or else would use this 'line-up of the democracies' as a pretext for a break, it was found on Eden's return that he would rather risk that calamity than the loss of American goodwill. There was a first breath of resignation."

In due course the full Cabinet was informed of what had transpired. No mention, however, was made of the divergence of opinion between Foreign Secretary and Premier. There were hints in the newspapers of disagreements, but the facts were not generally disclosed beyond the inner circle of the Cabinet in which policy

was evolved. Duff Cooper, at the Admiralty, was completely uninformed, and noted in his diary that there were no foundations for the rumours of disagreement.

There were all the appearances of deliberate concealment in this policy of secrecy. Believers in constitutional proprieties would have learned with disquiet that a junta of Ministers should have kept from the Cabinet a question of ministerial disagreement involving relations with the President of the United States.

For the Foreign Secretary there were unfortunate consequences. Throughout his career Eden has been distinguished by unimpeachable loyalty to his chief. In the War Cabinet he was to be twitted on his subservience to Churchill. To Chamberlain, from whom he differed, his sense of loyalty was strong. He disdained to break the harmony of the team.

The virtues of private life are not necessarily qualities to be commended in the public service. There are times, when the well-being or security of the State is involved, when a man must brush aside his sense of personal loyalty and brave the reproaches of disloyalty for the common good.

Eden was now becoming isolated in a Cabinet that was acquiescing in a policy of appeasement with which he could not agree. There were those amongst the younger ministers and many outside the Ministry who shared his anxieties and would have followed a lead had he chosen to give one. Outside the Government the force of Churchill was opposed to Chamberlain's course.

Eden could have rendered service by informing the full Cabinet of his complaints against Chamberlain. Full and frank discussion might have produced a change at least of emphasis, if not in direction, in Government policy, avoiding some of the errors that were to follow. Eden's loyalty prevailed. When the next disagreement shortly arose, and was brought out into the open, he suffered from the consequences of his previous forbearance.

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CHAPTER XI

RESIGNATION

ON the afternoon of Saturday, February 19, a Cabinet Council assembled at 10 Downing Street. Only at a time of crisis are Ministers called upon to confer during the week-end. On this occasion the reason for the summons was unknown to some of them, Duff Cooper, First Lord of the Admiralty, among them. Ministers met to be informed of the rift that had opened between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. They were surprised to learn that matters had gone so far as to involve Eden's resignation.

It was a shock to the quiet peace of the week-end. Not only the future of Anthony Eden, but the survival of the Ministry might be involved. In the country, his reputation was of the highest. Younger members of the party were his supporters. Were a hundred M.P.s to go into the wrong division lobby the Ministry would fall.

Beyond the political horizon at home was the stormy scene of Europe, with Hitler engaged in the first stages of the rape of Austria. Behind the clash of the two protagonists, the ageing Premier and the young Minister, was the issue of the deployment of the force of British influence on international affairs. It was but dimly discerned through the cigar smoke of that Cabinet Council.

The final break between Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had not been long delayed after the divergence on the Roosevelt letter. When that matter had been disposed of, the way was clear for resuming the discussions with the Italians. Eden crossed the Channel on January 25 to ascertain the views of the French Government. He secured approval for the general line of policy over Italy and it was emphasized to him that any general settlement on which recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia was to be made to depend, should be made to include the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain. About 40,000 Italian troops still remained, despite the agreement that volunteers should be withdrawn. Eden entirely agreed that Italy would need to honour her word and carry out a

substantial withdrawal as a preliminary to the opening of negotiations.

Back in London, he found Grandi reluctant to meet him at the Foreign Office. The Ambassador was well aware of the difference in outlook between Chamberlain and his Foreign Secretary. Eden, he knew, would raise the Spanish question which the Duce wished to evade. Chamberlain, he had reason to suppose, would not. There had been unofficial approaches that had disclosed the Premier's eagerness to get negotiations going.

Lady Chamberlain, Sir Austen's widow, had been staying in Rome. She retained the friendship with Mussolini that had developed in earlier days, when her husband had had cordial talks with the Duce, and when Locarno had been amicably concluded. Unofficial exchanges proceeded through her between Rome and 10 Downing Street. Through her, Count Ciano, the Duce's son-in-law, and Foreign Minister, conveyed an urgent warning that "terrible things" were about to happen to Europe and that if Britain did not at once come to terms with Italy, it might be too late.

Early in February, Neville, through his sister-in-law, received a message that Mussolini was ready for an early agreement to cover all points in dispute. Still Grandi delayed his visit to the Foreign Office. To a direct invitation from Eden he pleaded, in refusal, a prior engagement at golf. It was contrived to make Chamberlain place the blame for the delay on Eden and his departmental advisers.

These were Eden's least happy days in office. Sensitive natures are exposed to stresses of which men of tougher fibre are not conscious. From the strains of Whitehall it was refreshing to be amongst the electors of the Midlands, and from their loyal support, to derive the strength to continue to bear the burdens of office. It was an inspiration to establish contact with the people who so patently put their trust in him. Like Baldwin, he was fortified by the conviction that in its broad lines, his policy was a fulfilment of the will of the men and women in the heart of England.

Turning from the troubles of Europe, he stood before the young members of the Junior Imperial League and talked to them of the ideals that were the basis of his own political faith. From the platform of Birmingham's Town Hall (February 12) he delivered

what, unknown to him, was to be his last public speech as Chamberlain's Foreign Secretary. He spoke of the difficulties and anxieties of his work and in a message addressed to them found words of encouragement for himself. "I know the difficulties which beset us all. But youth looks forward with vigour and faith. The only hopeless creed is fatalism and the belief that to struggle for your ideals is not worth while, the feeling that somehow your ideals will be cheated in the end.

"The essential factor in diplomacy, as in every branch of life, is the attitude of mind in which we approach our tasks in the present and our prospects in the future. Let that attitude be one of refusal to accept defeat." And then, a little later followed a declaration of the faith that has carried him through divers negotiations. "I think that the main lesson of diplomacy is that, in the long run, nothing is impossible."

After the refreshing contacts of the week-end, he returned to Whitehall and the perplexities over Italy. The Prime Minister was restive and impatient. Time was running against him. There were protests over delays from Ciano, in Rome. Chamberlain had worked himself into the state of fearing that Italian opinion would be raised to white heat against Britain and that there might be some overt act of hostility. He resolved to break the deadlock by sidetracking the Foreign Office and arranging a meeting with Grandi through an unofficial go-between, an official in the Conservative Party. The Ambassador was delighted by the invitation.

There is an unpleasant undercurrent about these preliminaries to the meeting. The Prime Minister involved himself in the appearances of a backstairs intrigue, casting an implied slur on his Foreign Minister. It was natural that it should have given rise to suspicion that he was intriguing against his own Minister. In some fashion he was. The sinister suggestion came to be made that he accepted Grandi's aid against Eden, whose resignation from office he wished to bring about. Chamberlain's defenders have denied the truth of this. Had he acted more openly the appearances could not have given colour to the suspicion.

At this stage, German moves against Austria seemed to add urgency to negotiations with the Italians. Hitler had put pressure on the Austrian Chancellor, Schussnigg, to admit the Nazis to his Cabinet. Lacking support to resist, Schussnigg had submitted. The

days of Austria's independence were numbered. From Rome, Grandi was instructed to use Austria's situation as a ground for the immediate opening of conversations in London. Grandi was to let it appear that Mussolini was no more anxious to-day than yesterday to grasp the English by the hand. Should the Nazis, in the meanwhile, march into Austria and present the world with a *fait accompli*, then "there would exist no alternative and we should have to direct our policy in a spirit of sharp, open, immutable hostility towards the Western Powers".

Eden was present at 10 Downing Street at the meeting between Chamberlain and Grandi. The talks ranged over Abyssinia, Austria and Spain. When Grandi spoke of German menaces to Austria, it was put to him that Hitler had already obtained Mussolini's assent to Austria's absorption in the Reich. This Grandi denied, a denial that Chamberlain accepted but that Eden did not.

The question of foreign auxiliaries in Spain was raised. Chamberlain asked for formal Italian acceptance of the formula for withdrawal of volunteers that had been prepared by the Non-Intervention Committee. Grandi undertook to obtain Mussolini's acceptance of this during the interval of the week-end. Chamberlain agreed that, by then, he would have taken the Cabinet's decision whether talks should be opened forthwith.

During the interview no suggestion was made that either Britain or Italy would take action to preserve Austria. Both Chamberlain and Grandi used Austria to add point to their arguments and both to the same purpose—the immediate opening of Anglo-Italian conversations.

After the interview, when the discussions were reviewed, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were at variance on the next step. Chamberlain favoured immediate talks because of the urgency of Austria's peril. He was prepared to accept Mussolini's word about withdrawing from Spain.

Eden stood out against any form of compromise. He was not to be influenced by considerations of Austria, holding that Anglo-Italian talks would not have any effect on Hitler's intentions. He was confident that, talks or no talks, the Duce would not intervene to save Austria, and that Hitler was acting on the certainty of the Duce's private assurances. Nor was Eden prepared to accept Mussolini's word about Spain—it had proved too often to be

valueless. Acceptance of a formula for bringing back Italian troops from Spain was not sufficient. Let the withdrawals begin—it would then be soon enough to start negotiating.

The differences developed. Chamberlain would recommend the Cabinet to agree to immediate talks with Italy. Rather than agree, Eden would quit office. Such was the situation when the Cabinet met on February 19. If talks were agreed to then Eden would go. If talks were not agreed to, then the Prime Minister might resign, or at least, so it was made to appear.

Eden now experienced the handicap of his sense of loyalty and his instinctive dislike of being the cause of dissension. He was a seceder, not the leader of a revolt. He could not acquiesce in the leader's policy, but he made no attempt to persuade others to rally to him as the champion of an alternative. Against the determined leadership of his chief he offered not opposition but non-co-operation.

Members of the Cabinet who met that Saturday afternoon had to reach a decision over differences of which most of them then heard for the first time. They were invited to make up their minds on the fairly simple issue—immediate talks with Mussolini, or talks deferred till by their behaviour the Italians had given proof of their better intentions. With Hitler threatening Austria's independence, the answer to reasonable minds seemed clear: Let the talks begin. The ostensible difference was not one of principle but of timing. With his shrewdness as a politician Chamberlain confined the issue to the tactical question, on which his case was strong. Granted that there should be negotiations, then let them begin without delay. But was it worth while to negotiate at all? This was delicate ground and Chamberlain directed attention away from it.

Cabinet Ministers were dismayed at the prospect of losing their young colleague. They were conscious of the advantages to be gained from his experience in affairs, and his prestige in the country and of the political consequences that might flow from his defection. They addressed themselves to the task of finding a formula, words to disguise differences and promote a compromise. The proceedings were adjourned till the day following.

Ministers outside the informed circle handling foreign affairs were disturbed. Duff Cooper feared the outcome. If Anthony left them it would be a body blow for the Government. There were

crowds in Downing Street as Ministers parted, and Eden was loudly cheered as he appeared outside Number Ten. "This I am afraid will stiffen his attitude," Duff Cooper reflected, "because he will feel that he has popular opinion behind him, which indeed he has."

When the discussions were resumed it emerged that the differences had struck deeper than had at first appeared. The Prime Minister reported that he had received assurances from Grandi that Mussolini would accept the formula for Spanish volunteers. It was a timely discovery.

This assurance counted for nothing with Eden. At bottom, as Chamberlain knew, he did not think it worth the while to talk with Mussolini or with Hitler either, until they had established that peaceful intentions backed their words.

Some divulgence followed of the other difficulties between Chamberlain and his Minister—the letter sent to Mussolini without consultation with the Foreign Secretary, the rebuff to President Roosevelt that had first caused hints of resignation. These personal matters served only to obscure the simple issue about talks with the Italians. They were not allowed to illuminate the wider theme of the proper course and conduct of foreign affairs.

There is nothing in the records so far available to suggest that the fundamental issue of negotiating with the dictators was ever directly raised. The Premier's doctrine of appeasement seems to have been acquiesced in without challenge.

No way was found, there was no way to find, to bridge the gulf between the two men. Eden, indeed, was not present at the final discussions. By letter he had informed Chamberlain of his inability to accept any of the suggested compromises. He was bent on resignation and he went. With him resigned Cranborne (Lord Salisbury) his under-Secretary.

That night an exhausted Prime Minister summed up the result: "I have won through but it has been only with blood and tears." He could look forward to pursuing his appointed policy without the doubting Minister seeking to restrain him. Instead there would be Halifax as Foreign Secretary, a man ripe in experience of men and affairs and one made acceptable to him by close identity of views. In future there would be no need for backstair methods for the accomplishment of the Prime Minister's aims.

That night another man reflected on Eden's resignation and brooded far into the night on the possibilities of the unforeseeable but plainly menacing future. A telephone call to Chartwell had informed Winston Churchill of the news. He was dismayed. "On this occasion only, sleep deserted me. From midnight to dawn I lay on my bed consumed by emotions of sorrow and fear. There seemed one strong, young figure standing up against the long, dismal drawling tides of drift and surrender, of wrong measurements and feeble impulses. He seemed to me at this moment to embody the life-hope of the British nation. Now he was gone."

With the passing of time there will be additions to our knowledge of the circumstances of the resignation. Little remains to be known of Eden's attitude; that has been clear. But concerning the part played by Neville Chamberlain much remains uncertain. He appeared to his Cabinet at the time, and to his biographer later, as one who was concerned to go as far as his principles permitted to retain Eden in the team.

Since then, he has been made to appear in the role of a man playing a double game—of pretending a concern to retain Eden and of plotting against him to ensure his departure. Thus Duff Cooper (Viscount Norwich), recalling in his autobiography the events of the crisis, wrote: "The Prime Minister was in fact deliberately playing a part throughout the Cabinet discussions. While allowing his colleagues to suppose that he was as anxious as any of them to dissuade the Foreign Secretary from resigning, he had in reality determined to get rid of him and had secretly informed the Italian Ambassador that he hoped to succeed in doing so. Had I known this at the time, not only would I have resigned with Eden, but I should have found it difficult to sit in Cabinet with Neville Chamberlain again."

This conclusion, so damaging to Chamberlain's reputation, is based upon a passage from the report that Grandi sent back to Rome on February 18 on his interview in Downing Street. He wrote:

"Chamberlain, in fact, in addressing his questions directly to me expected from me—this was obvious—nothing more nor less than those details and definite answers which were useful to him as ammunition against Eden. This I at once realized and I naturally tried to supply Chamberlain with all the ammunition which I considered might be useful to him to this end. There is no doubt

that in this connection the contacts previously established between myself and Chamberlain through his confidential agent proved to be very valuable. Purely as a matter of historical interest I inform your Excellency [Count Ciano] that yesterday evening, after the Downing Street meeting, Chamberlain sent his agent to me (we made an appointment in an ordinary public taxi) to say that 'he sent me cordial greetings, that he had appreciated my statements, which had been very useful to him, and that he was confident that everything would go very well the next day'."

Was Grandi telling the factual truth? Lord Templewood, in his account of the Eden resignation, denies it. He pours scorn on the suggestion of a Chamberlain intrigue, categorically declares the untruth of the meeting in a taxi and dismisses the passage as the product of a too vivid imagination. "He produced a story as good as was ever put into a diplomatic dispatch. Indeed it was one of those pictures that had every quality except a resemblance to the original." But the statements here dismissed were sufficiently convincing for Duff Cooper. Both men were members of the Cabinet, though Templewood was better informed, but the essential difference between them was that Duff Cooper had a mistrust for Chamberlain with whom Hoare was in sympathy. So the matter hangs in suspense, an issue undetermined. Had Chamberlain not indulged in devious approaches the occasion for the suspicions could not have arisen.

The announcement of the resignation was carried by the newspapers on the morning of the Monday (February 21). There was an immediate debate in the House of Commons lasting over two days. Ministers approached it with a certain uneasiness, for Eden's reputation was of the highest and it was not known to what extent he might seek to exploit the occasion. There was no ground for their apprehensions.

As a prelude to the debate, Eden made the personal explanation that according to Parliamentary precedent it is the custom for a retiring Minister to offer. There was a full attendance of members to hear him, the second Foreign Minister to quit office in a little more than two years. He spoke with evident restraint and did no more than skim over the surface of the differences that had divided him from his leader and his colleagues. First, the Italian question and his objection to the opening of conversations before Italy had

given proof of her good faith. The objections were stated with equal clarity and terseness—"The attitude of the Italian Government has not justified the immediate opening of conversations. Italian propaganda against Britain is rife throughout the world. I am myself pledged to this House not to open conversations with Italy until this propaganda ceases. I have been responsible in the past eighteen months for several attempts to better our relations with Italy. They have all failed.

"In January of last year we signed the Anglo-Italian agreement (the Gentlemen's agreement). Within a very few days the first consignment of Italian troops left for Spain. It may not have been a breach of the letter of the agreement, but it was of the spirit. The same agreement contained a clause, a specific clause dealing with the cessation of propaganda. Yet propaganda was scarcely for an instant dimmed.

"Last summer the Prime Minister and Signor Mussolini exchanged letters and relations took a marked turn for the better. Then there ensued the incidents in the Mediterranean [Italian submarine attacks] and the glorification by the Duce of the victories of Italian forces in Spain. We cannot risk a further repetition of these experiences, we have had assurances enough in the past.

"Recent days have seen the successive violations of international agreements and attempts to secure political decisions by forcible means. We are in the presence of the progressive deterioration of respect for international obligations. It is quite impossible to judge of these things in a vacuum. This is a moment for the country to stand firm, not to plunge into negotiations unprepared.

"It is the traditional method of diplomacy to prepare for conversations before they are opened. It is seldom right to depart from that traditional method that has been tested by time and experience. It is certainly not right to do so because one party to the negotiations intimates that it is now or never. Agreements that are worth while are never made on the basis of a threat. Nor in the past has our country been prepared to negotiate on such conditions."

Leaving the immediate question of Italy, he referred to the incident of the Roosevelt approach, but in terms that did not put the facts before the House. There had been another important decision of foreign policy, he said, on which the difference between

him and the Prime Minister had been fundamental. There was, indeed, a real difference between them in outlook and of method. If the government of the country was to speak with undivided voice on international affairs, it was essential that Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary should have a similar outlook and wish to pursue similar methods. The more intense the interest which each one of them took in foreign affairs, the more imperative did that unity become.

In a brief final passage he stated his objections to the course the Prime Minister was following, the policy of appeasement. "Of late," he said, "the conviction has steadily grown upon me that there has been too keen a desire on our part to make terms with others, rather than that others should make terms with us. This never was the attitude of this country in the past. It should not in the interests of peace be our attitude to-day.

"I do not believe that you can make progress in European appeasement, more particularly in the light of the events of the past few days (Austria), if we allow the impression to gain currency abroad that we yield to constant pressure. Progress depends on the temper of the nation and that temper must find expression in a firm spirit. The spirit I am confident is there; not to give voice to it is, I believe, fair neither to this country nor to the world."

The House heard him with respect and sympathy, recognizing his sincerity of purpose. There was relief among the Ministers and on the part of their opponents some disappointment. This was not the speech that was going to divide a party and bring down a government. Nor, indeed, had that been the speaker's intention. The speech reflected the man—admirable in tone, a simple straightforward statement of the facts of the situation, as easy to follow as one of his expositions of a problem to a conference, and as little impassioned. Behind it was the note of regret—regret at leaving a task to which he had devoted himself, regret at finding himself at variance with men with whom he had been associated.

Should he have said more? The man's poise was perfect. He had risen above any ignoble feelings. A lesser man might have tried to attack and avenge himself on the leader from whom he differed. His loyalty to his leader and his party was beyond reproach—but was not something more required of him than personal loyalty? He believed that the policy which he deplored was inimical to his

country's interests. Was it not therefore his duty to have placed loyalty to his country before loyalty to his friends and to have denounced appeasement and the appeasers as being destructive of his country's safety? "This never was the attitude of this country in the past," he had proclaimed. Then, should he not have devoted his power and his prestige to opposing a course he considered to be disastrous? You may pose the question and the reply is the simple one—such was not this man's way. It is not in Eden's nature to be the leader of a revolt.

Cranborne, his under-Secretary, was more forceful in his language, and one sentence roused the House. Having specified the various means by which the Italians could have attested their good faith, he declared, "I must confess that in default of such evidence for His Majesty's Government to enter on official conversations would be regarded not as a contribution to peace, but as a surrender to blackmail."

It remained for Churchill to point the moral to the tale in phrases charged with full force of resentment and apprehension. "This last week has been a good week for the dictators—one of the best they ever had. The German dictator has laid his heavy hand upon a small but historic country [Austria] and the Italian dictator has carried his vendetta against Mr. Eden to a victorious conclusion. The conflict between them has been long. There can be no doubt whatever that Mussolini has won. All the majesty, power, and dominion of the British Empire have not been able to secure the success of the causes which were entrusted to the late Foreign Secretary by the general will of Parliament and of the country. All over the world, in every land, under every sky and system of government, wherever they may be, the friends of England are dismayed and the foes of England are exultant."

The exultations of the Italians was undisguised. Eden's fall was proclaimed by the Italian Press as another victory for the Duce. A contemptuous valediction from Hitler testified to the Fuehrer's satisfaction. Nothing Chamberlain could have done could have contributed so effectively to Italian cordiality for the opening of the Anglo-Italian conversations that were straightway pushed ahead. It was a tribute unimpeachable in its sincerity to the character and purposes of Anthony Eden.

CHAPTER XII

MUNICH AND AFTER

FOR eighteen months Anthony Eden was free from the cares of office. Gifted with sight to penetrate the future, he would have found cause for satisfaction that he had been spared the humiliations that lay ahead. He was not one who in the name of appeasement was to tread the path to Munich. Lacking this gift of foresight, he would have been less than human not to have felt the twinges of regret at being severed from the work to which, for six years, he had been devoted. But never did he doubt, whatever the forfeit he must pay, that what he did was right. He had the comfort of the support of those in the party and the country whose opinion he valued, those who believed that right should come before expediency. The personal question of his own political future was not one that had entered into his calculations.

There was a stirring of indignation when he heard it suggested that, as with his predecessor in office, ill-health had played its part in affecting his judgment and so had contributed to his resignation. It was a relief to hear a young member, Ronald Cartland, rise to suggest that not health but differences in age might have caused the rift between Chamberlain and his Minister—"Perhaps those who scan the horizon and have many years ahead of them look with rather different eyes at all the problems of to-day from those who have not so many years ahead."

Eden was still suffering from annoyance when he addressed his constituents at Leamington, to render an account of his action and to express his thanks for the messages of goodwill and support he had received from all parts of his constituency. The preliminary courtesies fulfilled, he went straight to the question of his health and the miserable innuendo.

"Judge for yourselves," he said, "whether I look a sick man. You shall be my witnesses there is no shred of truth in that suggestion. The decision I took was not because I was tired, but because of the conviction no other course was open. Tonight I am more

than ever convinced I was right. I should have despised myself had I taken any other course."

Another argument had been used against him—that as the majority of his fellow-Ministers were against him, he should have accepted their advice and carried on in office. "That view," he said, "I cannot take, because, as Foreign Secretary, I was responsible to Parliament and to the nation for the conduct of foreign policy. No one else has that same responsibility in the same degree. Had I remained I should, believing the opposite, have had to recommend this course [of appeasement] to the House of Commons, a course I regard as precipitate. I should also have had to conduct the negotiations, the outcome of which may have the gravest consequences for the world. I should have been a hypocrite to do so."

There were, furthermore, the personal difficulties of working with a Prime Minister with whose purposes he was not fully in sympathy. "He has strong views on the ultimate aims of policy, on conduct and on method. I also have strong views and they are not the same. I have done my utmost to bridge the difference. I know he has done the same. Last week-end I realized, as I know he realized too, that this difference of outlook was deep and real. The only possible course for a Foreign Secretary in those circumstances was to resign. No man can conduct foreign affairs to best advantage by the methods of another. To attempt it would be to make the worst of both worlds."

At the meeting's close the constituents testified in appropriate and enthusiastic fashion to their confidence in their member. In that confidence they never wavered.

The break was carried through in accordance with the best traditions of English public life. Chamberlain thought it right to reward Eden with a friendly note of appreciation of the restraint he had shown. "The most popular way for you would have been to emphasize differences and to call for support. I have no doubt you have been urged to do this, perhaps by some who would not be sorry to attack the Government. Whatever the temptations you resisted them. The dignity and restraint of your speech must add further to your reputation."

Chamberlain, at least, had every reason for satisfaction at the way in which the resignation had passed off. There had been none of

the unedifying circumstances that had distinguished his own parting from Lloyd George years before, and he could well afford to play the magnanimous part. There is nothing so disarming of a potential critic as to praise him for the good judgment he has shown in his restraint.

Eden's resignation was shortly over-shadowed in the press of events. It was the opening act of the crisis year of 1938. In March Hitler occupied Austria. In May there was the first rumblings of the storm over Czechoslovakia. In the autumn, after the alarums of war came the masquerade of Munich.

Neville Chamberlain clung with an old man's tenacity to his purpose of appeasement. At the back of his mind he harboured a dim sense of resentment against Eden for having obstructed him. Thus, after Hitler had taken over Austria, he wrote: "It is tragic to think that very possibly this might have been prevented if I had had Halifax at the Foreign Office instead of Anthony at the time I wrote my letter to Mussolini." He wrote as though Mussolini had not been irretrievably committed to Hitler beyond the influence of talks with Britain. Nor was there reason to believe that had Mussolini been induced to send a couple of Italian divisions to the Brenner, that action would have deterred the Hitler of 1938. What was clear, even to Chamberlain's eyes, was that, with Austria gone, the Czechs could not be saved.

Eden, as the months of that troubled summer slipped by, meditated much and spoke little. Looking with anxious gaze at the dictator-menaced Continent, he responded in his own fashion to the realities of the times. The old cries were resounding once again, the old glorification of war. Nations were told that they were the bravest on earth. Brave for what? Not to evolve the arts of peace, but to be ready to slaughter members of another brave nation somewhere else. All the panoply of arms, of drum and trumpet, was out again, so short had been man's faith in enduring peace.

What was the lesson for England? He gave his answer at the St. George's Day banquet. To uphold our ideals and our democratic conception of life, we must rouse ourselves to a supreme effort such as was being made in the autocratic states. They followed their purpose with passionate fervour. The British spirit must be equally roused.

"This," he declared, "is a time when every endeavour should be

made to promote national unity. Only as a united nation can we give of our best. We have to give of our best or lose the things we treasure most. Party warfare for its own sake should have no place in the scheme of things to-day. The need of the hour is for the spiritual and material re-armament of the nation."

National unity and the abandonment of party strife was very much in his thoughts in these days, but he did not overlook the contribution that Conservatism could make. In troublous days a special responsibility rested on the party.

What should be the conception of their political creed in modern times? A virile progressive force, he responded, determined to uphold our national traditions, attached to our age-long liberties and democratic institutions. As such it had incomparably the greatest part to play in British political life, but only on the lines that he had defined. The nation did not want to vote Socialist, still less Communist. If the Conservative Party were to retain its position it would be "only as the interpreter of all that is most progressive in our creed and, as I think, all that is best in it".

Chamberlain lost no time in pushing ahead with his Italian conversations. Eden's withdrawal made for ease in negotiation on both sides. In April an agreement was signed. It cleared away possible points of controversy on the Mediterranean, and struck the bargain—recognition for the Italians in Abyssinia when the Italians were withdrawn from Spain. To what extent, if any, Mussolini had been detached from Hitler time would show.

Churchill viewed the arrangements with misgiving, seeing a complete triumph for Mussolini. What, he wrote to inquire, did Anthony think? Eden shared Winston's doubts.

"Mussolini gives us nothing more than the repetition of promises previously made and broken by him, except for the withdrawal of troops from Libya, troops that were probably sent there originally for their nuisance value. It has now become clear that, as I expected, Mussolini continued his intervention in Spain after the conversations in Rome had opened. He must be an optimist indeed who believes that Mussolini will cease increasing that intervention now should it be required to secure Franco's victory."

The shadow of war moved nearer in the summer of 1938. There is no need, here, to repeat the story of the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia. It is not part of Eden's story. He was not present to greet

the returning Prime Minister, waving the declaration that bore Hitler's signature, and announcing to the crowds in Downing Street: "This is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour." The crowds cheered that peace had been preserved. Their relief was understandable. But the posturing Prime Minister, deluding himself that Hitler's signature meant "peace for our time", that is beyond comprehension unless Noel Coward was in the right—"He has just discovered what every chorus boy discovers in his first year on the stage—the heady quality of applause."

Eden took part in the debate that followed. From his place in the House he heard the resignation speech of another Minister of the Crown who had parted company with Neville Chamberlain—Duff Cooper, First Lord of the Admiralty. He heard Duff Cooper's melancholy, castigating words of protest—"It was peace with honour I could not stomach. If he had come back from Munich saying 'peace with terrible, unmitigated, unparalleled dishonour', perhaps I would have stayed. But 'peace with honour'!"

There was, too, the sombre reckoning of accounts presented by Winston Churchill in magnificent phrase and with dire foreboding. "All is over. Silent, mournful, abandoned, broken, Czechoslovakia recedes into the darkness. She has suffered in every respect by her association with the Western democracies and the League of Nations. . . . In future the Czechoslovak State cannot be maintained as an independent unity. . . . We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude which has befallen Britain and France. . . . This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and moral vigour we rise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time."

Eden's speech cannot be classed with eloquence of that sustained quality. But though couched in a lower key his words carried their protest against what had been done and, perhaps because they were pitched in a lower key, they made the deeper impression at that time when praise for the man of peace and not blame for the appeaser was the note of the hour.

"Surely," Eden said, "the House will be agreed that foreign affairs cannot indefinitely be continued on a basis of 'stand and deliver'. Successive surrenders bring only successive humiliations

and they in their turn more humiliating demands. We have lately —let there be no doubt about it—run into grave dangers. However the immediate issues have been resolved, no Member can doubt the menacing dangers. These cannot be conjured by words of goodwill. They cannot be met even by negotiations, however sincerely meant and well pursued. If they are to be met and overcome it can only be by a revival of our national spirit, by a determined effort to conduct a foreign policy upon which the nation can unite—I am convinced such a policy can be found—and by a national effort in the sphere of defence very much greater than anything that has been attempted hitherto. If there ever were a time for a call for a united effort by a united nation, it is my conviction that time is now."

It has been the case argued on behalf of Neville Chamberlain that by the surrender of Munich he bought time for re-arming. If it be so, he incontinently squandered the commodity he so dearly purchased. Time worked in favour of Hitler rather than the democracies. Hitler made his Germans labour. In Britain there continued to be over a million and a half unemployed.

Chamberlain, through this period, is a problem for the political psychologist. When he allowed his native shrewdness to operate he saw Hitler and his men with realist eyes—"Hitler's Germany, bully of Europe—movement of troops the only thing the Germans understand," there were reflections in plenty that he committed to his diaries. Yet, at the same time, he was in thrall to the spell of his dream of being Europe's pacificator. So he allowed himself to place some trust in Hitler in defiance of judgment and accumulating experience. The record was plain enough—Treaty of Versailles broken, but Locarno would be kept; Locarno broken, no territorial claims left in Europe; Austria entered, no interference intended with Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia had been dismembered, yet Chamberlain could accept Hitler's signature to a declaration of peace "for our time".

There are episodes in the murk of our national past that men of pride would sooner forget—the inhumanities of the slave trade, Jeffrey's bloody assize, the field of Peterloo, the fires of Smithfield and the religious persecutions. In the Saxon kingdom there were some who regretted the St. Brice's massacres, and men were not overproud of Ethelred the Unready. The surrender of Munich has

been added to the black days in the national calendar, occasions when we fell below the standards of our own past.

That autumn the broadening of the Ministry was recommended by Halifax. Was Chamberlain to make an offer to Eden? He could not bring himself to assent. The differences between them were not, he realized, superficial—they went deeper than Eden's speeches might suggest. Eden pleaded for national unity as a means to speed re-armament; he left out or chose not to see that "the conciliatory part of this policy is just as important as the re-arming". With that analysis of his views Eden would have agreed. His failing faith in conciliation had not been restored by the Italian example.

In November, the House of Commons was asked to give its approval to the coming into force of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. Eden challenged this course on the ground that the Italians had not carried out their part of the bargain. The facts were incontestable.

Despite the opening of negotiations with Britain, Italian intervention in Spain had continued contrary to the Non-Intervention Agreement. German and Italian 'planes had kept up a continuous bombardment of the Spanish Government lines. They attempted to establish by air a blockade of Spanish Government ports, in which British shipping had severely suffered. The presence of the Italian aeroplanes, totalling over three hundred, had been a breach of the Non-Intervention Agreement; their continuing presence was against the terms set down for the coming into force of the Anglo-Italian pact. The honest truth was that the conditions the British Government had laid down for the coming into force of the Agreement had not been satisfied.

"We have waived it," Eden said. "Whether it be right or wrong nothing is going to disguise that fact from the world. What conclusion will the world draw? They know we have embarked on a policy of appeasement. The object is, and rightly, to eliminate possible causes of war in a spirit of mutual collaboration and goodwill. But this can be carried out only if all concerned are willing to subordinate purely national interests for the common good.

"This country has been ready to do this—ready to do it for a long time past. The Government has been ready to make and has made very far-reaching concessions in their sincere desire to improve the general atmosphere. But up to now there seems to me to have been little sign of a similar spirit from other states concerned.

We are constantly giving and they are constantly taking. I am reminded of the charity collectors in 'The Hunting of the Snark'—they collect but they do not subscribe.

"I am driven reluctantly to the conclusion that there is a real danger, if this policy of appeasement continues to be interpreted in different ways by different countries. Many international problems will, it is true, have been eliminated in a sense satisfactory to others, but our position and interests will have become gravely imperilled. We shall be faced by a bigger international problem and I gravely doubt whether we shall receive any assistance in solving it."

A week later Eden made one of his most compelling speeches. It was devoted to the subject that was his main preoccupation in those dark days—the need for a supreme national effort in the face of international danger. It was the confirmation of Chamberlain's analysis of their differences. Rejecting the idea of appeasement from weakness, he demanded strength through national unity and endeavour. To this all classes and all parties should make their contribution.

Democracy, he said, was faced with a challenge in every field—in commerce and the business field, no less than in foreign policy and in armaments. It could be met only by an enormous voluntary effort comparable in its scope and intensity with what other nations were able to achieve by means of compulsion.

"This will call for a measure of self-surrender by every citizen. It will call certainly from the wealthier classes for a certain measure of sacrifice of present standards of life. It will call for a reorganization and above all for a speeding up in the working of the democratic machine. The time factor is all-important in the modern world and the democracies, by comparison, are painfully slow. It will mean something of a revolution in our national life.

"It can be done. No effort of which any other nation is capable is beyond the power of our own people. But let us make no mistake. Unless such an effort is made there is no future for the British people, and the things they stand for, except a progressive weakening of their authority and a slow sliding down the slope. Britain is a first-class power or nothing. With her area and her population she simply cannot live as a second or third-class power."

Looking on what had been done about national defence, he was

forced to say that despite the money and effort that had been spent, we were not re-arming on a scale comparable with other states. The difficulty was that we were still on a peace-time basis whereas they were on a basis for war. Either we must employ new methods or we must submit to permanent inferiority. The problem was pressing, as the House knew well. Was it not a reproach, when the man-power of the nation should be fully organized, that there should be 1,750,000 unemployed? That total was a terrible indictment.

In a moving peroration he made his call for national unity. "How can the greatest national effort be given by the nation unless it is based on real unity, the outcome of a real demand from all sections of the people and made on behalf of an England which is free and united, an England of equal opportunity for all, regardless of class or creed, an England in which comradeship is the spirit of the nation, an England in which men refuse to rest content while poverty continues to be the lot of the many? This then is the issue: Can we adapt our methods to meet the challenge to democracy in no spiteful or back-biting spirit, but in a determination to uphold our traditions, to win for our people greater security, improved conditions of life, and a wider hope for the future?

"There are immense reserves of goodwill waiting to be utilized, but this can never be done on a party basis. My appeal is not merely for a government of all the parties—that is mere machinery. What is more important is the spirit behind such unity, a determination for a nation-wide endeavour, to win for our people not only security of defence but security of employment in the factory and on the land, a faith that democracy can achieve these things and a realization that if it will not try it cannot survive."

In fifteen years of debate Eden had given few such indications of his quality as a speaker. Tied, as he had been, to the Foreign Office brief, he had often sounded platitudinous and dull. Freed from the restraints of office he rose above the old restraints to find that he could appeal not only to the reason of his hearers but to touch their emotions. The idealist who had troubled his fellow Ministers when he was at the Foreign Office, was here stating his political faith. For some of his party, the old style leave-well-alone Tories, it was vaguely disquieting. But it was an expression in the domestic field of aspects of his beliefs that had caught the ear of the liberal-minded when he had championed the cause of the

League of Nations. Some months were still to pass before the manpower of the nation was to be harnessed to the purposes of defence. Under the pressure of war, guided by another Prime Minister, the enormous effort Eden visualized was achieved and the national unity he called for realized.

Chamberlain's leadership was promoting divisions rather than unity. He looked on Munich as a diplomatic triumph that was to inaugurate a new era. Ministers and supporters vied with each other in praise of their chief. The younger men of the party heard the fulsome tributes with dismay. They shared Eden's misgivings and looked to the Front Bench for a lead towards the national unity he advocated. No lead came—the hungry sheep looked up, but were not fed. Chamberlain rode his horse with a backward seat. He had acquired his political thought too far back in Victorian days to be able to leap ahead to the needs of the new times.

Eden was now one of a powerful group of dissentients of the party—Amery, Cranborne, Wolmer, and, newly arrived Duff Cooper. Churchill's was the most powerful voice amongst them. There were younger men following them—Richard Law, Harold Macmillan, Ronnie Tree, Ronald Cartland and many more. Their patriotic purpose has long since been acclaimed, but in those days they were looked at askance in the party. "Jitterbugs" became a term of reproach. There were mutterings in the constituencies and the influence of the party machine was suspected. Old colleagues drew apart from Duff Cooper. Winston Churchill felt himself compelled to demand a vote of confidence from his constituency committee at Epping under threat of fighting a by-election. Men and women of Warwick and Leamington remained behind their member, but, with a martinet at the party's head, it required political courage to testify against Chamberlain and appeasement.

Eden made use of his freedom from the ties of office to extend his experience across the Atlantic (December 1938). Canada he had visited fifteen years before, but he had set his foot on United States territory only in the outpost of Hawaii. During his years in office he had appraised the importance of United States opinion on European affairs. He had never courted the Americans, but in his assessment of any situation he had not left American reactions out of the reckoning. Now he was able to take first-hand impressions of the peoples of the great democracy over the water. The knowledge

he gained at first hand of the American outlook and way of life was to prove an aid to understanding in the days of closer association that lay ahead. The President received him at the White House and he began to build up his acquaintance with America's leaders.

Both in Washington and New York he increased the popularity that he had won as champion of the League of Nations. With those important members of the American community, the newspaper correspondents, he established cordial relations. During his stay he went to a performance of Olsen and Johnson's zany show, "Hellza Poppin'." Olsen drew a revolver, and aiming it at Eden, fired twice. This was Olsen's idea of a joke, but Eden, less familiar with his antics than were New Yorkers, shot out of his seat, and seemed to be thoroughly annoyed. A moment later he saw the joke, and was laughing heartily.

In an address to the Annual Congress of American Industry he underlined the perils to which the democratic way of life on both sides of the Atlantic was exposed. He spoke as an apostle not of appeasement but of freedom, using phrases that foreshadowed the speech on the four freedoms that Roosevelt was to make.

Twenty years before, he recalled, Americans, with their allies in Europe, had fought to destroy the power of arrogant militarism for ever, so that tolerance and justice, not force and greed, should prevail. Twenty years after, they had to reflect ruefully how far they were from their goal. Whatever else the world had been made, plainly it had not been made safe for democracy. Other systems of government threw out their strident challenge. The British and Americans stood as democrats for the rights of the individual, with the political purpose of assuring freedom for expression of thought and conditions in which the individual human personality could develop. According to the democratic view, man was not made for the state but the state was made for man. After centuries of endeavour to realize the democratic ideal, attempts were being made to persuade man to reverse his faith. Man was threatened by the state he had himself created. It would be the greatest irony in human history were mankind to allow progress to be stifled by the setting up of this new idolatry—the worship of the state before whom all must bow down, to whom they must sacrifice their freedom of faith, of speech, of worship. No believer in democracy could accept these false conceptions.

"Not that we," Eden went on, "to whom has been handed down this heritage of freedom have a false conceit of ourselves. We in Britain know full well that we are no paragons. There are many chequered pages in our long history. One of the worst concerns our dealings with you one hundred and sixty years ago. Yet, admitting this, we know there are certain standards in which we believe and which we will not yield up.

"As an Englishman addressing this great American audience tonight, I tell you that the old beliefs are the beliefs of the English people still and we will hold to them in the years ahead. We know that we must champion our ideals and the faiths to which we hold with an equal strength or others which we abhor will take their place. This endeavour will tax our strength and endurance to the uttermost.

"For all this in spirit we are preparing. Nor are we calling out for help to others, nor seeking to hire others to pull our chestnuts from the fire. We have no such intention. We are destined in our generation to live in a period of emergency of which none can see the end. If, throughout the testing time, we hold fast to our faith, cradle it in stone and get steel to defend it, we can yet hand on our inheritance of freedom intact to generations that are to come."

The address was well received by the American Press. Eden could leave for home with the assurance that using words of admirable restraint, well attuned to the audience before whom he was appearing, he had put over the cause of the free peoples of Europe to the great republic of the West. It is not always the most strident propaganda that is the most effective. On his return three days before Christmas he remarked that "the last thing we want to do is to entangle other countries in our own troubles". None the less there was no ignoring the obvious that across the Atlantic there was a very present help against time of trouble.

In the New Year, Eden noted with satisfaction that Roosevelt was sounding a stronger note in his message to Congress. While the emphasis was on "methods short of war" the President was openly calling for defence against aggression.

In those days Eden's mind was much occupied with the problem of the state and the individual. He could reaffirm the fundamentals in the ancient British faith only by conceding the need for

some reform in British practice. He rejected with scorn the proposition that man was an instrument resigned blindly to serve the purposes of the state, an unthinking cog in a remorseless machine. On the other hand it was the duty of the state to seek better conditions of life so that every individual had a fair chance to live and grow. He was forced to concede that we were still far from attaining that ideal.

"There is yet," he said to the Rotary International, "no true equality of opportunity. The slums still exist even though the mansion has become a rarity. There is much that is unjust and harsh in modern England."

CHAPTER XIII

APPEASEMENT ENDS IN WAR

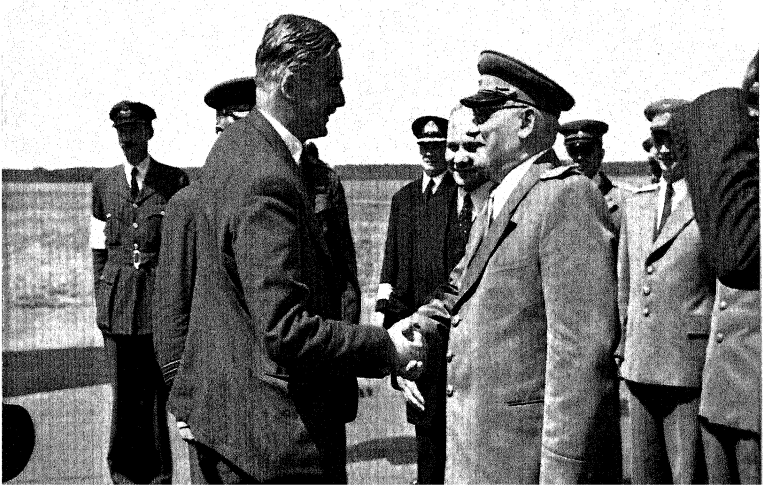
IN the opening weeks of 1939 there was an uneasy stillness on the Continent. Chamberlain persuaded himself that appeasement was yielding ground for hope. When it was put to him that to end the party rift, Eden and Churchill might be brought back he demurred. To bring back the man they called "warmonger" might adversely influence the dictators and induce them "to break out now before the democracies have further strengthened their position".

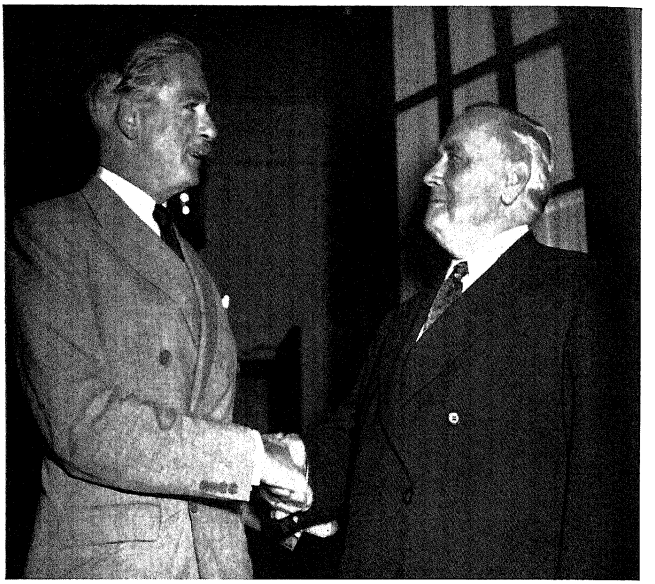
The sense of mission was strong in Chamberlain. So far had he gone towards visualizing the beginning in Europe of the realization of his hopes that early in March he let fall a hint of expectation that a disarmament conference might be held before the year was out. This drew a remonstrance from Halifax, most hesitatingly worded—"I realize how immense is the personal burden on you and how personal is the contribution that nobody but you can make"—but the remonstrance followed that the Prime Minister should have spoken out without consultation. The ink was scarcely dry on Halifax's letter before Hitler had torn away the flimsy cobweb of hope.

Choosing the Ides of March for his stroke, the Fuehrer marched into Prague and annexed Bohemia and Moravia. The rape of Czechoslovakia was complete. After a last flicker of reluctance, Chamberlain abandoned his delusions concerning Germany. Two days later, in public speech, he asked the question: Is not this a step in the direction of a German attempt to dominate the world by force? He gave his response to the challenge: "No greater mistake could be made than to suppose that because we believe war to be a senseless and cruel thing, this nation has so lost its fibre that it will not take part to the utmost of its power in resisting such a challenge if it were made." Before the month was out the Prime Minister had issued the formal reply to Germany. Poland was guaranteed against aggression. As Churchill pronounced, Neville Chamberlain had a hard core and did not like being cheated.

Behind the Premier were the people who shared his resentment.

At the Potsdam Conference in 1945. Next to Stalin are Molotov and Vishinsky, who, below, is greeting the Foreign Secretary at Berlin Airport. In the Conference group the domed head marks the presence of Sir Winston Churchill





In discussion at the White House with President Eisenhower, and, above, welcoming Senator Wiley, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whom he entertained at lunch at Carlton House Terrace

There was a quickening of opinion. The pacifism of former years, the peace-at-any-price mood of Munich vanished. There would be no further kowtowing to the dictators.

Eden, Churchill and their friends, less surprised and without disappointment in their expectations, reacted to the occasion. Their dismay was caused not by what Hitler had done, but by Britain's unpreparedness to face what he might yet do. Rumours filled the air. There was talk one night of an imminent German air attack on London.

Eden and Churchill were together in the smoking-room of the House of Commons when the evening newspapers had brought the first brief reports of Hitler's march into Prague. They waited anxiously to learn of the Prime Minister's reactions. They were depressed by the terms of his first announcement in the House, and were relieved by his sharp declaration that followed two days later. Unite and arm became the watchword of the dissentient Conservatives. Eden took the lead in pressing their case. He tabled a motion on the order paper of the House calling for a vigorous prosecution of British foreign policy and suggesting the formation of a National Government on the widest possible basis. There was the further proposal that such a Government should be entrusted with full powers over the nation's industries, wealth and man-power "as a means of enabling the country to put forward its maximum military effort in the shortest possible time". Thirty-five members of the group, headed by Winston Churchill, backed the motion with their signatures.

This motion was a declaration of faith, a contribution to the creation of opinion, never a matter of practical politics. The very fact it had been tabled was sufficient to negative its declared purpose of promoting the formation of a new Ministry. Chamberlain supporters rallied to their chief. They protested against a reflection on his personal prestige. Chamberlain was not prepared to widen the basis of his administration, certainly not by the inclusion of Churchill or of Eden, not until the last slender chance of preserving peace had gone. Churchill in the Cabinet, the very embodiment of a policy of war, would be construed by Hitler as a declaration of defiance.

Mingling with back-benchers of all parties, Eden had become aware of the strength of feeling Chamberlain roused across the

floor of the House. It was very different from the state of things in Baldwin's day. Chamberlain reserved his appeasement approach for the dictators; to his political opponents he presented the partisan, scoring off them in the petty points of debate with relish undisguised. There were times when a man conscious of the need for the political and spiritual unity of the people was moved to doubts about leadership that infuriated opponents and accentuated party divisions. The yes-men of the party might susurrate approval. There were others who were pained by the Premier's partisan speeches—"jeering, pettifogging party speeches that divide the nation". In the space of a few months Chamberlain dissipated some of the political goodwill that his predecessor had built up.

The Continent had barely readjusted itself after the shock of Hitler's coup in Czechoslovakia before the junior partner of the Axis moved against Albania (April 7). The fruits of appeasement were no more noticeable in Rome than in Berlin. To remove any lingering doubts, the Pact of Steel was concluded (May 22) by the Axis Foreign Ministers, Ribbentrop and Ciano. The terms of Eden's warning were being abundantly fulfilled. "If the policy of appeasement continues to be interpreted in different ways by different countries many international problems will, it is true, have been eliminated in a sense satisfactory to others, but our interests may become gravely imperilled."

For those who wished to read his warnings and to follow the course of his conduct of affairs, Eden's speeches were made available in book form. A handsome volume in blue, simply entitled "Foreign Affairs", contained fifty speeches ranging in time from his maiden appearance in the House of Commons to his début before an American audience. He had been curiously reluctant to consent to their re-publication. The book was well received and the speeches were pronounced to be in the best tradition of English statesmen, delivered by one who, obviously, was deeply concerned for the future of his country and of mankind.

In a pointed phrase in his preface he disposed of Prime Ministerial claims to exclusiveness as the onlie begetter of a policy of conciliation in European affairs. "There has grown up of late," he drily remarked, "a strange legend that the efforts of this country to improve relations with the powers of the Rome-Berlin Axis are of recent growth, that they constitute a new departure from

previous practice and this new era was only recently initiated. The pages of this book will show that there is no truth in this legend. The truth is that, under successive governments and successive foreign secretaries, the objective was always the same—by patient and persistent endeavour to promote understanding, more especially between the great powers of Western Europe. If there is a criticism to be uttered it is rather that even in those days we were perhaps too ready to accept professions of peaceful intentions at their face value."

He also made use of the opportunity to dispose of his critics who had attacked him for the questionnaire he had submitted to Hitler after the Rhineland coup. They had ridiculed him for this attempt to induce the Fuehrer to declare his intentions. The preface recalled that after the entry into the Rhineland explanations and even contributions to an accord were sought from Germany. "No one," Eden added, "will be found to-day to condemn this policy on the ground that it was too harsh. It is interesting to reflect what might have been the consequence if those who were so loud in their indignant criticism of the alleged tactlessness of the Foreign Secretary of the day because he sought to discover the true meaning of certain expressions of Herr Hitler's declaration of March 1936 had devoted their great talents instead to an exhaustive study of 'Mein Kampf'."

Great talents, in Eden's satirical phrase, had been sadly misapplied and misdirected. He was entitled to make his rejoinder. His judgment had been better than most, as the record of his speeches attested.

As the summer of 1939 advanced, German mutterings about Poland and Danzig and the Corridor mounted in tone and volume. Hitler was looking for a new Munich in the East to give him the Polish territories he coveted. How was Britain to give effect to her guarantee to Poland?

Eden, as he surveyed the uncertain and anxious continental scene, came to place his trust in Russia. To complete the peace-front in Europe the Russians must be brought in. It was the sole means yet remaining to convince Hitler that Britain meant business over the guarantee to Poland and that another act of aggression would be followed by war. Early in 1939 Eden urged a rapprochement with Russia on a reluctant Government. He, with Churchill

and their associates, continued to the very end to press for an Anglo-Russian understanding.

A Tory M.P. and ex-Minister needed a sense of strategic realities to rise above the normal prejudices of his political past to contemplate lining up Britain with the land of the Soviets. The experience of twenty years had confirmed Conservatives in their mistrust and detestation of Communism as a system and of Communists as the enemies of all non-Communist societies. At home, Communist propaganda had poisoned party politics. Paid agitators had stirred up trouble in the Trades Unions and attempted to cause disaffection in the Fighting Services. Abroad, Communist agents had been trouble-makers wherever scope for making trouble existed. Eden had had personal experience enough as Foreign Minister of the ramifications of Communist intrigue.

Nevertheless, rising above the antagonisms and suspicions of the past, he held that the urgency of Hitler's menace overshadowed all else. The past must be forgotten to save the future. He, and he alone of Conservative leaders, had met Stalin face to face. As a step towards reaching an understanding with the men of the Kremlin he placed himself at the Government's disposal ready to go as an envoy to negotiate with Stalin. Had his offer been accepted history might have had a different unfolding. On his 1935 visit he had made a favourable impression on Stalin. In 1939 he could have paved the way to co-operation.

The Russians were ready to join with the democracies against Hitler, though they had been excluded from the Munich meetings. In April, Litvinoff made the offer of an alliance. Had Eden then gone to Moscow with the authority of the British Government his mission would have been accepted by the Russians, suspicious of the West as the West of them, as evidence of the sincerity of British intentions and good faith. The Government rejected the offer and the chance was lost.

Chamberlain was not able to detach himself from his Victorian roots and he confessed to the "most profound" distrust of Russia. Nor had he faith in Russia's military strength and her "ability to maintain an effective offensive even if she wanted to". He distrusted her motives as having little connection with British ideas of liberty but to be concerned "only with setting everyone else by the ears".

For his doubts of Russia's military weakness Chamberlain could claim professional support. The British and French General Staffs were agreed that the Russian army was completely demoralized. They regarded Poland as a more valuable ally than Russia. The influence of these opinions, acceptable as they were to British Ministers, was reinforced by Polish mistrust. The Poles, placed between Russians and Germans, faced the peril of a new partition. Even as protectors against the Nazis, the Russians would not be suffered to pass over Polish territory. Who, in the light of their unhappy fate, can now say that the Poles were wrong?

Time passed. The Government hesitated, seeking for some compromise that would bring in the Russians without offending the Poles. At length it was agreed that a military mission should be sent to Moscow, but the preliminary discussions delayed its departure overlong.

As late as July, Eden was protesting in the House at the continued and interminable delays. "These negotiations with Russia," he said, "are always being forecast either in London or in Paris as just about to finish, but they never reach their end. Indeed I am reminded of La Rochefoucauld's definition of love and ghosts—everybody is talking about it, but nobody has ever seen it. For my part I wish that two months ago the Government had made up their minds to send the most authoritative mission possible to Moscow and that they had put at the head some political personality who could negotiate with the remarkable man who is head of the Russian Government today in everything except in name. If that mission could have been accompanied by military, naval and air advisers so much the better. Where doubts and suspicions have to be allayed—and everybody knows they exist—personal contacts can be more effective than the exchange of diplomatic notes, however skilfully drafted. There are times when an hour's talk may be worth a month of writing.

"Even now the Government should enlarge this military mission and make it a political mission as well. Why should we not arrange it so that not only will our Generals talk to the Russian Generals, but that there will also be someone who can talk to M. Stalin and see if we cannot finish off the whole thing in a week?"

Even at that late date Eden's method might have succeeded. Stalin was still not committed to the pact with Hitler. A team of

Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals, headed by a leading member of the British Government, might have convinced him that Britain was in earnest and a Triple Alliance might have been the result. As a means of impressing Hitler an alliance would have had a persuasive influence that appeasement never possessed. It was never tested. The Russians had invited Halifax to Moscow, but he did not go. Instead an official was sent, whom they looked on as a Foreign Office clerk. When a military commission arrived they expected to see Gamelin and Gort. Instead there were officers whose credentials did not appear to be adequate for the occasion. The Russian Government considered themselves to be slighted. Ribbentrop went to Moscow and the Soviet-German pact was concluded.

During that last summer of peace, Eden crossed the Channel to meet old friends in Paris. He was able to give them, speaking without official position, assurances of British support that he had not been in a position to extend when he was in office. He was glad, he was always glad, to be in Paris where, to a measure beyond all cities that he knew, life was lived so agreeably, with a rare display of courtesy and tolerance.

He attended Les Conférences des Ambassadeurs, presided over by Paul Reynaud, and he delivered an address in French—not the Anglicised French into which Winston Churchill, on occasion, has been known to lapse, but Parisian French of some elegance. He spoke of the friendship between the two countries, friendship that sprang from the heart and the head. "Le mariage de John Bull et de Marianne est à la fois un mariage de coeur et un mariage de raison. Et c'est pour cela qu'il ne saurait exister de liens plus forts, ni plus sûrs." He delighted his hearers with some quotations little known in France—from Pitt: "Où finit la loi, commence la tyrannie"; from Queen Elizabeth (Tudor); "L'Angleterre n'a pas besoin d'implorer la paix"; and his favourite lines from Lewis Carroll, of the charity collectors: "Ils ramassent l'argent des autres, mais eux ils donnent rien."

It was when he came to deal with the change in British outlook that he was followed with the closest attention. With almost country-wide unanimity the British people had accepted, it might almost be said had demanded, a Peace Front to resist any act of aggression. The entry of the Germans into Prague had produced nothing less than a revolution in the outlook of the British people

on foreign affairs, a revolution of which it was impossible to exaggerate the extent or the importance. "Elle a été soudaine, mais elle a été totale, à tel point qu'il serait difficile de lui trouver des précédents dans notre longue histoire. Maintenant nous sommes unanimes. Nous sommes tous d'accord, à quelque parti que nous appartenions et quelles qu'aient été nos préventions du passé. Et revenir en arrière est devenu impossible."

As evidence of the change of spirit he cited the decision in favour of compulsory military service. By reversing their ages-old tradition against conscription Britain had sought to give incontestable proof of her resolution. To underestimate British determination would be to commit one of the most tragic of errors on the part of an aggressor who should launch out on "des aventures de violence qui déclencheraient la guerre générale".

The speech was well received. Eden was required to repeat it before other hearers at a second meeting the following day.

As the month of July passed Hitler's propaganda machine became more clamant, the preparations for war more patent. At home, there were renewed demands for the inclusion of Churchill and Eden in the Cabinet. It was pressed on Chamberlain from without, it was urged upon him from within his Ministry. He was not prepared to yield to the pressure of opinion.

Watching the manœuvrings of the Nazis, Eden had no doubt that Hitler was hoping to repeat in Poland the success he had achieved in Czechoslovakia. The technique was precisely the same. Would the British Government stand firmly behind their guarantee to Poland? There were times when their resolution was questioned.

The House of Commons adjourned for the summer recess at the beginning of August for a break of two months, the Prime Minister, in ungracious terms, refusing to listen to appeals by members of all parties to arrange for a meeting at the end of August in view of the anxieties over Poland. Eden had devoted his leisure to service with the territorial battalion of the Rangers (K.R.R.C.), of which he was second-in-command. He went into camp at mid-August but within a week he was summoned back to Westminster. Two days previously Ribbentrop had signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Russia. It was clearly the thunder heralding the Hitler storm. Parliament was recalled to hurry through an Emergency Powers Bill. Orders went out to place the country on a war footing.

Eden noted that members reassembled in a mood not of noisy demonstration, but of sober resolution. No longer was he perplexed by anxieties over the future. The country was united. There was no excitement or hysteria, but of quiet resolve. The British people had made up their mind. The days of easy optimism and wishful thinking were past. At long last the issue was clarified for all and there was common agreement on what must be done, even though war be involved and all that the catastrophe of war must entail.

In a brief speech in the House, the last he was to make as a back-bencher, he added his words to the warning the Prime Minister had given to the Nazis. Let them not imagine that because of the Moscow pact the British would not desert the Poles. It was unthinkable. The leaders of the German people knew little of Britain's history if they did not realize that the greater the odds and the greater the difficulties to be faced, the stronger the British grew in their determination to stand by those to whom they had pledged their word.

He spoke of the danger that Hitler might resort to force in Poland refusing to believe that Britain was in earnest. "There is another danger," he added, "and, not having the responsibility of office, I do not see why I should not state it. It is possible that there are at this moment many people in Germany who believe that in the event of hostilities with Poland they may in a few short weeks, or months, obtain their military objectives, and that, having done that, they appear to believe that we should take no further interest in the matter. If there are any who really think that, they are making the greatest error in history.

"Step by step and stage by stage Hitler has planned the subjugation of Poland. If that process is continued, and if we do not join with others to resist it now, who can doubt that there will be another victim next year? While it is fearful to have to contemplate the use of force, I am convinced that the attitude of a large and overwhelming majority of the House endorses that determination as the only means by which at this late hour we may save Poland and also save our children from what some of us went through in the years gone by."

Some months ahead, when Poland, and France, too, had been subjugated, it fell to Eden to reject the German peace overtures and

to reaffirm the declaration he made that day. Did Hitler remember that he had been warned against his miscalculation?

At this final moment, Chamberlain sought to avert the calamity of war by a personal letter to Hitler. He wrote to establish beyond a peradventure that Great Britain would stand by the engagement to Poland. It had been suggested that because of the conclusion of the Russian-German Pact British intervention on behalf of Poland was no longer a contingency to be reckoned with. "No greater mistake could be made," the Prime Minister wrote. "Whatever may prove to be the nature of the German-Soviet agreement, it cannot alter Great Britain's obligation to Poland, which His Majesty's Government have stated in public, repeatedly and plainly, and which they are determined to fulfil."

The letter caused Hitler to pause. He accepted the letter as a suggestion that Britain and France, as in the previous year, would be prepared to negotiate a new surrender in the name of peace. A letter from Daladier appealing to Hitler to make a peaceful settlement was followed by Mussolini's intervention with a proposal for a conference. Throughout the last days of August Halifax strove for peace. Nevile Henderson, in Berlin, was kept busily engaged in transmitting the Government's communications in one direction and, in the other, Hitler's replies, backed by the bait of a new offer, the old inducement dangled yet again, but this time in vain.

On the 30th of August, a few hours before the German guns breached Poland's defences and Europe's peace, Eden broadcast a short address to the people of the United States. With the issue still in the balance his words had to be carefully chosen and reading them fifteen years afterwards one cannot but be struck by the skill with which he discharged his task of placing Britain's case before the Americans. The issue before the British people was simply stated. It was no mere question of the future of Danzig and the Corridor, not just a new phase in the age-long conflict between Teuton and Slav. Something bigger was at stake—whether Europe was to be ruled by threat of force, whether free peoples were to be called upon one by one to stand and deliver, whether aggression was at length to be checked and respect for international engagements restored. The phrases were to become hackneyed with repetition but they were fresh enough then.

"The time for a patchwork compromise is passed. The world has to choose between order and anarchy. For too long it has staggered from crisis to crisis under constant threat of armed force; we cannot live for ever at the pistol point. The love of the British people for peace is as great as ever, but they are no less determined that this time peace shall be based on the denial of force and a respect for the pledged word."

It was, in a new and more menacing situation, a restatement of his own case at the time he resigned from Chamberlain's Government. Respect for the pledged word—rather than condone Mussolini's breaches of his pledged word he had parted company with Chamberlain. Now that Chamberlain had reached the limit of condonation with Hitler, Eden was about to rejoin his Government. Chamberlain had once lamented that Eden had been the cause of delay in his approaches to Italy. Did Eden, I wonder, ever give way in his mind to the human weakness of reproaching Chamberlain for his miscalculations in the cause of appeasement?

With the first day of September came the news of the German invasion of Poland. The Cabinet sent an immediate ultimatum to Germany. Chamberlain invited Churchill and Eden to join his Ministry. Then events hung fire.

The hours of Saturday passed uncertainly for those outside the Government. The French were persisting in delaying their declaration of war. Last-minute parleys with Berlin were still proceeding. Eden and Churchill were no better informed than others outside the Cabinet as to the course of events. The House met that evening in restless mood, "torn with suspicion", as Chamberlain noted, "ready to believe the Government guilty of cowardice and treachery." He felt himself under an obligation of secrecy to the French and his brief, evasive statement left members bewildered.

Then occurred the famous incident as Arthur Greenwood rose to speak from the Opposition benches. Amery shouted across at him, "Speak for England." His robust words were cheered by the Tories.

"The feeling," says Duff Cooper, "was astonishing. Anthony Eden was sitting between Amery and me. Many of those in front of us urged him to speak. Indignation was by no means confined to our group. At about ten-thirty I went round to Winston's flat. He considered that he had been very ill-treated, as he had agreed the

night before to join the War Cabinet, but throughout the day he had heard nothing from the Prime Minister. There were present at his flat Anthony, Bob Boothby, Brendan Bracken and Duncan Sandys. We were all in a state of suspended rage."

In the morning, tension and uncertainty ended with the Prime Minister's broadcast. Britain was at war with Germany. There is a final picture of Anthony Eden before he took up his duties at the Dominions Office. Robert Boothby is the recorder of this glimpse in history's mirror—"On the Sunday morning, when war was declared, the 'Eden group' met for the last time. I was invited to attend. We listened in gloomy silence to the Prime Minister's sad speech over the wireless, followed by the announcement that a warbling note on the siren would warn the public of an impending air raid. Anthony Eden then walked over to the window and looked out with troubled eyes. I asked him what the matter was and he said, 'I am wondering whether there is anything more I could have done to prevent this.'" Boothby reassured him. So to the sound of the wailing of the first air-raid sirens, Eden made his way down Whitehall to resume his career as Minister of the Crown.

CHAPTER XIV

RETURN TO OFFICE

FOR the first seven months of the war Anthony Eden held the appointment in Neville Chamberlain's Government of Secretary of State for the Dominions. He was not a member of the War Cabinet, but had special access to it. When Winston Churchill formed his famous Coalition Government, Eden was transferred to the War Office (May 11, 1940), where he served until his return to the Foreign Office (December 23), seven months later.

The Dominions Office is a Foreign Office in miniature. The Minister is Foreign Minister for the territories of the world that are not foreign. While the Foreign Secretary deals with the representatives of states that may have no friendliness for Britain, his neighbour at the Dominions Office is more fortunate. His business is conducted within the imperial family.

Eden welcomed the opportunity to serve the Commonwealth cause. For a second time within a generation the call went out and for the second time the daughter states rallied to the motherland. At his desk in Whitehall the Minister was brought the messages of prompt response. Australia and New Zealand led the way. R. G. Menzies for Australia sent the message: "There is unity in the Empire ranks—one King, one Flag, one cause." For New Zealand Michael Savage testified: "With gratitude for the past, with confidence for the future, we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand."

The Canadian answer was delayed for a few days until Parliament had reassembled at Ottawa to make a formal declaration of war. In South Africa, the neutral Government of General Hertzog was evicted, and, with General Smuts back at the helm, the Union declared war.

Within a week Eden could report that the line-up was complete. The British peoples of the world were united against Hitler, more closely knit one to another in common resolve than at any time in their history. Not the Dominions alone, but India also was in the fight. From the Colonies there were loyal offers of aid.

"For some of us," Eden said in a broadcast to the Empire, "the challenge has come a second time in our generation. There must be no second mistake. Out of the welter of suffering to be endured we must fashion a new world that is something better than a stale reflection of the old, bled white. By Hitler's decision our new civilization must be built through a new war. We would have wished it otherwise. But our new civilization will be built just the same, for some forces are bigger than men. In that new civilization must be found liberty and opportunity and hope for all."

Before September was out, the unhappy Poles had been subjugated. While they were resisting the Germans in the West, they were assailed in the rear by the Russians. The new partition of Poland was completed. Hitler's "last peace offer" to the Allies was treated with contempt.

Eden twitted the Nazi propagandists with their miscalculation. They had forecast that the flimsy structure of the Allies would fall to pieces at the first critical hour and that the Empire would crumble into ruin. The Nazi prophets had been confounded by the event. They could not understand that in our greater freedom lay Britain's greater strength.

In October a lesser Empire Conference was held in London, Cabinet Ministers from each Dominion conferring with the members of the British Government on the most effective means for pooling resources for the common cause and co-ordinating the contributions of their countries. It fell to Eden to broadcast a welcome. He spoke on a subject that had occupied his thoughts for some years past—the example the British Empire afforded to the world of an association of sovereign states, associated in peace, freely co-operating in the service of common prosperity and a common civilization. The discussions ended, he accompanied the visitors on a tour in France of the British and French armies. It was the period of the phony war and the troops were beginning the long winter of their inertia and discontent.

It was Eden's privilege to welcome the first arrivals of fighting forces from the Dominions. On a grey December morning at a western port a number of ships of war came on in line ahead and behind them giant liners came streaming in, their decks packed with cheering troops. As they passed, a band on one of the warships struck up "Oh, Canada". The first contingent of the Canadian

Active Service Force had safely arrived. Vincent Massey, the High Commissioner, was there with the Minister to bid them welcome.

In February, Eden flew to the Middle East to greet more newcomers from overseas—Australians and New Zealanders in Egypt, Indian troops in camp outside Cairo. One morning he watched a fleet of transports come to anchor off Suez. The Anzacs were back to the lands where they had first seen service in 1915. He went aboard the leading ship with Wavell, Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East, to greet the men in the King's name.

While the New Zealanders were disembarking later in the morning, to entrain for Palestine, the Minister welcomed the Australians newly arrived. He was filled with pride at the evidence of the vast war effort of the Empire, swinging into its stride and already gathering its momentum. He returned with encouraging reports for audiences at home of what men of the Empire team were accomplishing. He was moved by the spirit that brought them rallying to the cause.

"What is it that has caused them to leave their homes, their work, their factory or their farms in their tens of thousands to offer man's proudest gift, his service as a volunteer? It is something stronger than sentiment, deep as that sentiment is. It is something stronger even than the ties of kinship, strong as those ties are. It is because, as one of them put it himself, in the simplest but most expressive terms; it seems there is a job of work to be done. These men who came across thousands of miles of ocean had understood the issue. It is their clear perception, the vision of the men from beyond the seas who should give us courage now."

In a dozen speeches in those days Eden preached the gospel of Imperialism. It had been outmoded in the years between the wars, frowned upon by the pacifist-idealists. It had not been the theme for Eden's praises when he laboured for the League and peace in Europe. Now he called for the sweeping away of the cobwebs of the placid ignorance that regarded British Imperialism as the disreputable relic of a shady past. It was no such thing. It was a bridge to the new age, a source of comradeship, an opportunity for service.

"Already," he proclaimed, "the British Empire has shown itself, by its example of toleration and wise government, to be a civilizing and humanizing influence over the whole world. It has been an instrument for raising the standard of life among backward races,

It has been a great spiritual force, creating better feeling and understanding between nations."

The opening months of the war confirmed and extended Eden's faith as an imperialist. He was still engaged in the pleasant tasks of the Dominions Office when the call to sterner duties came.

In April the phony war ended. The Germans swept through Denmark and Norway was invaded. The Battle of Norway was lost and Neville Chamberlain's premiership was ended. As Hitler launched his attack in the west, Winston Churchill took over the leadership. The Socialists, who had declined to serve under Chamberlain, took office in the famous Coalition. To Eden fell the responsibilities of the War Office.

He had little time, as each day brought tidings of new disaster, to settle down in his new post. He had scarcely crossed Whitehall to enter his new department before Holland had fallen to the new technique of parachute attack. His first appearance as War Minister was in a broadcast appeal for volunteers for local defence. The War Cabinet readily agreed to his suggestion for the formation of this force, later, under Churchill's inspiration, to be called the Home Guard. It is a sign of the pressure of those days and the expedition with which business was transacted that the formation of this auxiliary force of part-time soldiers passed through the stages of suggestion, approval and action within three days.

By the time the Secretary for War had made the acquaintance of his staff and his professional advisers the Battle of France had been lost. Eden found that he had assumed departmental responsibility for the Army when it was facing the most crushing defeat that ever befell a British expeditionary force.

He had been no more than a fortnight in office when he learned from Reynaud, then on a visit to London, that the possibility had to be faced of France's withdrawal from the war. That evening (May 26), with Churchill, he had to face the painful decision of ordering the British garrison of Calais to fight on to the last. It was a sacrifice, necessary to keep open the escape lines of Dunkirk, that involved Eden's own regiment. Days of high tension followed before the Deliverance of Dunkirk and the evacuation to England of 300,000 allied troops. The Army was home, but its equipment had been lost.

The Secretary for War directed the emergency re-creation of

the Army. A triumph in organization was achieved. Units were reconstructed and, as far as equipment was available, re-armed. By mid-June pretty well every man of the new divisions had been furnished with a rifle, but there were few guns for the artillery or tanks for the mechanized units. While this went forward the defence of the island coastline had to be provided for, troops directed to strategic points, possible landing-places fortified. Volunteers pressed forward to join Eden's part-time volunteers, for whom at first nothing but an armlet could be made available by way of accoutrement. By mid-June half a million men had been enrolled.

Italy had become a participating partner in the fighting. While the issue was in the balance, Mussolini had hung back. The defeat of the French armies raised the Duce's courage and he handed in his declarations of war a few days ahead of the French surrender. It was the final commentary on the policy of appeasement. In 1939, when the Italians, in their discretion, had held back, Chamberlain had still entertained the idea that it was the goodwill he had promoted in Rome that had caused the Duce to hold his hand. In June 1940 the most cherished illusions had to be surrendered.

When the confusion and tension was at its height, Eden had crossed to France with Churchill to take part in the final interviews with Reynaud. It was his last visit to France until after the liberation. The Germans were closing in on Paris and the Government, retreating from the east, were then at Tours. There was a flurry of excitement about the cross-Channel flight, for German 'planes were now operating well to the west.

The Tours conferences were of unrelieved gloom. Reynaud, supported by some of his Ministers, was resolute for fighting on, even though they had to withdraw to their territories in Africa. But the aged Pétain had no stomach for the fight and Weygand, now generalissimo, had already in his mind accepted the necessity for capitulation. The English Ministers sought to counter French pessimism. Churchill strove to fire Pétain with some of his own abundant resolution. It was in vain.

Eden made the acquaintance of the young General, de Gaulle, with whom he was to have many discussions in the future. He was then under-Secretary for Defence and Eden found him to have the stoutest heart of any of the French Ministers. The visitors left

The American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, takes leave at the door of 10 *Downing Street*

The Foreign Secretary shares a joke at Geneva with Chou En-Lai, Leader of Communist China

"But best of all—no more jokes
about 'Long Engagements' and eternal Crown Princes"
A Cummings Cartoon from the "Daily Express"

with no illusions about the future. France had reached the limit of resistance.

A few days after the French capitulation Eden came to the microphone to speak to the nation on the prospects of the future and the assault that all considered to be imminent on the shores of Britain. He was addressing a people who were soberly resolved to face the hazards and perils of the future however grievous they might be. They had heard the words of their indomitable leader —"We shall not flag or fail. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields, and in the streets. We shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender." With magnificent presumption the British people were ready to take on Hitler alone. There were even sighs of relief among the foolhardy that at last, with the Frenchmen out of it, we could run the war, our war, in our own fashion. Without echoing their foolhardiness Winston shared their spirit—our war now and his to run.

It is against this background that Eden's broadcast speech must be read. It was one that in its particular terms could scarcely have been made to any other nation at such a time. It was devoid of heroics. He used commonplace, casual phrases. He spoke not as a leader in war spurring a gallant people to die in defence of their land and their liberties, but rather as the chairman of a company inviting his shareholders to take part in an enterprise slightly out of the ordinary line of business. His opening sentence was a masterpiece of understatement.

"The time is approaching when the enemy, having overrun all the outlying forts of liberty, will launch his assault on the main citadel, our own land. He has already delivered bombing attacks by night. No doubt these attacks will be continued. Possibly other forms of attack will be attempted also. I am convinced that these can be repulsed." In a description of what was to be expected from the horrific Hun, these matter-of-fact phrases are in a class of their own. There is a particular artistry in the choice of these qualifying phrases—"No doubt" and "Possibly".

The address continued in that quiet tone of its introduction. What, when invasion came, were we to face? Just "a hard test", "a great adventure". What was the advice for those about to be invaded? It was simple. Each had his part to play; those not in the

Forces had already been told what to do. The great point for civilians was that they should not get in the way.

This passage has a relish peculiarly its own. Everybody knew what had happened in France—the scenes of horror, the Panzers driving all before them, irresistible: the poor civilians fleeing before them, choking the roads in their masses, until the enemy tanks (so the reports had stated) ran over them, steamroller fashion, crushing flesh and bone into the metal of the roads. If any imaginative listener thought that such incidents of horror could take place in Britain the quiet voice on the wireless should have dispelled his anxieties.

With less emotion than a broadcaster at a holiday camp the instruction from Eden came—"May I underline one point in the official advice you have received? That point is this: Stay where you are; refugees on roads or railways hamstring those on whom your defence depends." As to the dive-bombers and the night raiders —their bark was worse than their bite. The enemy deliberately augmented the noise to increase the alarm. "He thinks we are a people who can be frightened out of our wits by these theatrical effects. We will show him that he is wrong."

The people might take courage from the thought that the enemy would not be having it all his own way, but here there were no predictions of destruction to encourage rosy hopes. We had a powerful air force and this would give the invaders "a very bad time". We had great numbers of aircraft and we were getting more every day—"and don't forget our guns, nor our balloon barrage which caught a couple of raiders the other night".

Read fifteen years afterwards, the speech must appear as a classic in anti-climax. At the time it was differently received. It was successful in its purpose. It was attuned to the ears of a race who give the best account of themselves not in a mood of heroics but as they take things in their stride. The author of this speech knew his countrymen.

"Your character," he told them, "is the first reason for my complete confidence. We know you will never flinch. We have learned from the tragic fate of the French that civilization cannot be preserved by material means alone. We have seen that ramparts of concrete are not enough. It is only by the dedication of the human spirit and the human will, the length and breadth of the land,

that victory will be won. Real and complete victory will be achieved because the British people are inspired by burning faith in their own high ideals and by a determination to set them up again when, for the time being, those ideals have been beaten down."

The days of the summer went by and invasion was still delayed. Hitler was posturing in France, parading in victory before the Parisians and the Arc de Triomphe. Here at home the makers of munitions toiled as they had never done before. Despite prodigies in production, output could not keep pace with demand. Eden had to engage with fellow Ministers in a competition in priorities, in which Beaverbrook, Minister for Aircraft Production, that poacher from Fleet Street, was the star performer. Eden contrived to get his share of allocations and was able to speed the Army's re-equipment. By August he could report that units had been brought up to strength, reissued with arms, and moved to their appointed positions in the scheme of land defence. To the divisions of the British Expeditionary Force many new divisions had been added. A new army was being fashioned out of the half million men who since May had been called to the colours. When the strength mounted beyond the needs of defence at home, the diversion of forces to the Near East could be contemplated. Churchill was not the leader to sit waiting for the enemy blow to fall.

It has been Eden's experience never to be allowed to remain undisturbed for long to run his department from behind his desk in Whitehall. Like the Prince over the water, he has for ever been on his travels. Affairs in the Middle East led to his departure, in October, on the first of his wartime missions to take counsel with the men on the spot.

Since July he had been Chairman of the Committee of Ministers set up to advise on the war in the Middle East. It was on his recommendation it was decided to run the risk of reducing our slender resources at home and to send out two tank battalions to supplement Wavell's forces in North Africa. It was a courageous decision and it had an important bearing on the course of the war. The Italians were massing for an attack from Libya on Egypt.

North Africa was the zone in which our ground forces could engage the enemy. Eden, with the backing of his committee, favoured the immediate building up of the strongest army possible,

so as to be capable of going over to the offensive when circumstances permitted. Churchill was in full agreement and ready to run the risks at home that would be entailed by sending abroad any of the few fully equipped divisions. With many and complicated problems arising at the Middle East Command, the Prime Minister felt the need for ampler information and closer contact with the Commanders than written communications could supply. So it came about that Eden left by air to make a personal inspection of the Middle East. Winston took over his duties at the War Office.

From Gibraltar, Eden sent an encouraging report on the state of the garrison. He pressed for the despatch of reinforcements to Malta. He met the Desert Army commanders at Cairo and sent back reports on their plans and requirements, in particular for tanks. He arranged for a Turkish mission to join the Army, and he made a date with General Smuts for a meeting at Khartoum. When he spoke of returning home, Winston urged him not to hurry back, emphasizing the valuable results that were attending his visit. Before he did leave he was to engage the Generals in a discussion on the possibility of taking the offensive to forestall the Italians. As the Prime Minister concentrated his thoughts on the Eastern Mediterranean he was impressed with the need to make Crete secure before the Italians could step in, and with the need to aid the Greeks, now attacked by the Italians.

Telegrams flowed freely out to Eden. The instructions from London became an embarrassment when they came to conflict with the projects of the Desert Command. Wavell was planning an offensive on his own account, but he would not allow more than obscure hints of his intentions to be conveyed to Whitehall by the medium of the telegraph.

At last, on November 8, Eden was back in London. To a delighted Prime Minister he unfolded Wavell's plan of operations. In December the offensive was begun that ended in the rout of the Italians under Graziani, the first British victory of the war.

The Middle East mission brought down the curtain on Eden's term at the War Office. Halifax was to leave the Foreign Office to go as Ambassador to Washington. American opinion, sensitive and delicately poised, was steadily moving under Roosevelt's careful leadership in sympathy with Britain. The handling of our

affairs at that stage demanded the highest qualities in our representative-in-chief. The choice of Halifax—the only ambassador ever to serve while retaining his membership of the British War Cabinet—testified alike to the importance attributed by the Government to the appointment and to the high estimation in which Halifax was held. For six years this High Churchman of vice-regal bearing filled the post with distinction and success.

So it befell that Eden returned to his place at the Foreign Office. He could not be less than gratified by the appointment, but he had keen regrets at leaving the War Office. He had formed ties of closest professional intimacy with the leaders of the Army. He had found it easy to get on terms with them and he had won their respect. He could speak their language, he brought almost a professional understanding to their problems, and he had proved himself an able champion of the service. As an organizer he had achieved distinction in his work in the re-creation of the Army after Dunkirk.

CHAPTER XV

FOREIGN OFFICE AGAIN

THE return of Anthony Eden to the Foreign Office in December 1940 marked the opening of one of the most intimate and harmonious associations in British politics. Through the chances of the years, the changes of Ministries, the regrouping of states, the re-orientations of policy, Eden was to serve as counsellor on foreign affairs of Winston Churchill, fidus Achates to this pater Aeneas. It was an association founded on personal liking, strengthened by mutual respect, by the younger man's admiration for his leader and by the older man's recognition of capable service, loyally, indeed devotedly, rendered.

The gulf of years that accentuated the differences between Eden and Chamberlain was no impediment to a close understanding between Churchill and Eden. Winston was a figure in public life almost before Anthony had been breeched, and had become a member of the Cabinet before the other went to Eton. By the Thirties, time had begun to obliterate the gap of the years. The young Minister who championed France and the cause of security through the League spoke language that won Churchill's sympathetic attention. His stand against Chamberlain and the excesses of appeasement showed him to be a man of principle and courage.

As Prime Minister, Winston came to a new appreciation of Eden's worth, his efficiency as administrator and organizer, his skill in negotiation. There was a community of outlook between them so that Winston could rely upon the other's judgment. Eden's appraisement of men, of affairs and of a strategic situation was akin to Churchill's own.

When the Foreign Office became vacant, on Halifax's appointment to Washington, the Prime Minister had no doubts about the succession. By his experience and capacity Eden was marked out for the post. Politically there were no objections. He was particularly acceptable to the Socialist wing of the Coalition, and the old criticisms of the right wing Tories had not survived the outbreak of the war that had confirmed the soundness of Eden's judgment.

The Prime Minister brought his powerful influence to bear on the Foreign Office, as he did on all departments of state. The Foreign Office, in time of war, must lose its peace-time independence. No longer can it function in glorious isolation, but by the over-riding needs of defence must become merged in the national team as partner, rather inferior in status, of the fighting services.

A generation earlier, Arthur Balfour had brought his philosophical meditations to bear on the war-time role of the Foreign Office. He concluded that among the most important political considerations with a direct military value was the promotion of co-operation with the Allies. "In the Seven Years War and the Napoleonic Wars, this co-operation was far easier to manage," he pronounced. "Things are different now and the result is an amplification of the problem which makes it quite impossible to treat it as military and to leave it to the management of soldiers and sailors."

There was an occasion in 1918 that is amusing to recall, when the War Office, in the name of the General Staff, presumed to offer instructions to the Foreign Secretary on the proper management of his affairs. The Minister, having barbed his quill, replied with Balfourian brilliance. At the time the Germans, in their last offensive of the First War, had broken out on the Marne. Balfour wrote: "The General Staff has taken the advantage of the leisure provided for them by the German offensive to circulate a paper telling the Cabinet how the State Department in Washington and the Foreign Office in London are mismanaging our relations with Mexico. I am grateful to the General Staff for their assistance, but would respectfully point out that their method of rendering it is not very convenient. If one Office finds subject for comment or criticism on the policy of another it should discuss it in private. . . . I do not for a moment suggest that the General Staff have no interest in Mexican affairs, though they cannot themselves land a corporal's guard to protect the oilfields. . . . Let them remember that while diplomatic failures may hamper the army, military failures make the Foreign Office helpless. But what then? Because the General Staff have not been fortunate enough to oil the wheels of diplomacy with a few dramatic victories, am I to ask members of my department to draw up alternative plans of military operations for immediate consideration by the Cabinet? . . ."

Things were better conducted in the second war than in the first. Contact with the Commanders in the field, and co-ordination between the Allies, were recognized as important aspects of the direction of operations. Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary engaged in a succession of missions overseas. Eden had not long taken over at the Foreign Office before he set out for Cairo to continue the work he had begun in the autumn as Secretary for War. He became involved in the affairs of Greece that gave rise to one of the most hotly controverted episodes of the war.

It was during his autumn visit to Cairo that aid for the Greeks had first come up for consideration. By February it was an urgent question. Through Foreign Office sources, Eden received warnings that the Germans were planning to attack in the Balkans in March. What course was Britain to take? We had pledged our support for Greece. It was unlikely that the troops we were in a position to send would be sufficient to hold the Germans. But were we to stand by and do nothing?

Accompanied by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Sir John Dill) Eden flew to Cairo. He began his discussions in the light of the Prime Minister's direction that, desirable as it was to send the Greeks assistance, it should not be done if the prospects were no more hopeful than for another Norwegian fiasco. The three Commanders-in-Chief in Cairo were unanimously in favour of giving Greece the fullest help: there was a fair chance, they considered, of halting a German advance.

Eden crossed to Athens to meet the Greek King and his Foreign Minister. Dill, Wavell and other officers went with him. There were long discussions with the Greeks at which the possibilities were closely considered. It was resolved that an endeavour should be made to establish a Balkan front. The Prime Minister and the War Cabinet endorsed the decision.

Eden sought to engage the help of the Turks and the Yugoslavs. On February 26 he arrived at Angora and met President Inönü, the Foreign Minister Sarajoglu and the Turkish Chief of Staff. From Moscow our Ambassador, Sir Stafford Cripps, arrived by a Russian 'plane to join in the discussions. They were not fruitful. The Turks would fight were they attacked. Otherwise they proposed, as they indicated in deferential phrases, to stay out of the fighting for which their forces were inadequately equipped. While

the Angora meetings proceeded, our Ambassador to Belgrade was sent with confidential messages to the Yugoslavs.

There followed some misgivings in London about the risk of operations in the Balkans and at one stage the War Cabinet were preparing to withdraw their approval. Protests from the Greeks, combined with the views of Wavell and his Generals, endorsed by Eden, turned the scale. The Greek enterprise was to go ahead.

Eden was on his way back to London when nationalist officers in Belgrade rose against Prince Paul, the Regent, whom they suspected of preparing to capitulate to the Nazis. The Regency Council was dissolved in the name of the young King Peter. There were anti-German demonstrations in the streets. Encouraged by these events, Eden turned back for Athens to attempt to build up a combined front of Yugoslavs, Greeks and Turks. Even the Russians were prepared to demonstrate their goodwill to their fellow Slavs.

While these manœuvres were in progress, Hitler ordered his bombers to blast Belgrade. For three days the defenceless city was bombed with systematic frightfulness. It was the curtain-raiser to invasion of the Balkans. Invaded from several points, Yugoslavia was forced to capitulate. The Greek flank was exposed. Allied forces fought delaying actions, but the end was inevitable. Before overwhelming German force, the Greeks surrendered. In a lesser Dunkirk over 50,000 British troops were evacuated.

In the light of after events, the decision to embark on the Greek operations was challenged by the critics. Churchill was accused of having diverted forces insufficient to influence events in Greece, that might have enabled Wavell to clinch his successes in North Africa. Since it was on the advice of Wavell and his staff that the operations were undertaken, the Prime Minister could scarcely be faulted for acting against the wishes of the military commander on the spot.

Eden gave the House of Commons a report on his mission in his first major speech since his return to the Foreign Office. His account was as full as discretion permitted of the discussions in which he had been engaged. The outcome of the battles in Greece had been bitterly disappointing, but on the credit side was the fact that Hitler had been compelled to fight, to battle his way through countries that he had hoped to gain without the firing of a shot. "In this war," said Eden, "we are fighting not for gains but causes.

Greece is the embodiment of those causes. I believe that had we not gone to her help we could not have raised our heads again."

The debate that followed was discursively critical of the Government. The Prime Minister replied to the critics in one of his most vigorous speeches, so that only three members registered their votes against his 447 supporters. This was the last debate of consequence in the old House of Commons that was destroyed by bombs a few nights later.

Back at his desk in Whitehall, Eden's thoughts flowed westward across the Atlantic. No British Minister was inclined to underestimate the importance of retaining and developing the goodwill and assistance of the United States. The turns and shifts of American opinion were as carefully weighed in London as in Washington. No move was made by the Foreign Office, no speech delivered by the Minister, but the effects on the American mind had been carefully calculated.

Eden had watched with admiration the skilful steps by which the President had led his people forward to granting to Britain all assistance short of war. The passing of the Lend-Lease Bill, that act of "deep and farseeing statesmanship", was followed by the establishment of American anti-U-boat patrols and the decreeing of a state of national emergency. Short of active belligerency there was little more that the United States could do in resistance to Hitler.

Eden used the occasion of a Mansion House meeting to express Britain's appreciation. The President, a few hours before, had declared, "We do not accept and will not permit the Nazi shape of things to come," words that Eden welcomed as the resolute expression of the fixed determination of the most powerful nation on earth.

Eden looked forward to the conditions that would follow the ending of the war. "We have declared," he said, "that social security must be the first object of our policy after the war, and social security will be our policy abroad no less than at home. It will be our wish to work with others to prevent the starvation of the post-armistice period, the currency disorders throughout Europe and the wide fluctuations of employment, markets and prices that were the cause of so much misery in the twenty years between the two wars. Europe will end this war starved and bankrupt of all

the foods and raw materials. Let no one suppose that we intend to return to the chaos of the old world. To do so would bankrupt us no less than others.

"When peace comes we shall make such relaxation of our war-time financial arrangements as will permit the revival of international trade on the widest possible basis. To organize the transition to peaceful activities will need the collaboration of the United States, of ourselves and of all free countries which have not themselves suffered the ravages of war. We have no motive of self-interest prompting us to the economic exploitation either of Germany or of the rest of Europe. This is not what we want nor what we could perform. The lasting settlement and internal peace of the Continent as a whole is our only aim."

The speech was fully reported in the United States. Eden's remarks were well received. They were the answer to the Isolationists, who had been asserting that Britain's war aim was to restore the Empire to its old place for the benefit of the financiers and imperialists.

At this time there were many American callers for the Foreign Secretary to meet. There was the new Ambassador, J. G. Winant, who was to prove himself a true friend of Britain, of whom Eden said, "Humanity is the key to his life's work." There were long discussions with Harry Hopkins, then on his first visit to Britain as the President's special envoy. Japan was one of the major subjects of their talks.

Japanese designs to take advantage of Britain's preoccupations with Hitler were the source of anxiety. Eden had put on a bold front before the Japanese Ambassador, to whom he gave a strongly phrased warning that if attacked we should protect our interests in the Far East. With our forces fully engaged against the Germans, the means to back the words were not conspicuously abundant.

From Hopkins, Eden sought to obtain an indication of American reaction in the event of Japanese aggression. He suggested that the Japanese regarded the presence of the American fleet at Pearl Harbour as a "routine matter" and suggested that the United States should offer some unmistakable indication of their intentions in the Far East. A positive line might have a deterrent effect upon Japan. These views were faithfully reported to the President. The

catastrophe of Pearl Harbour a few months later put a period to British speculation and anxieties.

Despite the pressure of the war, the Foreign Secretary found the time to overhaul the machinery of the Foreign Service. Many complaints had arisen from the weakness of our representation abroad, which was held to have contributed to our diplomatic reverses in the pre-war period. Sir Malcolm Robertson, M.P., a former ambassador, had presided over an investigation into the Diplomatic Service. The Minister announced (June 11) the Government's decision to carry out reforms on the basis of the Committee's report.

First, the three branches were to be combined and one foreign service formed from the Foreign Office, the Consular and the Diplomatic branches. The highest posts would be open to all members. Secondly, the system of entry would be revised so that the field would be extended from which recruits were drawn. Thirdly, financial reforms would enable men of ability to take up a career from which, in the past, they would have been excluded because they lacked private means. Men who had proved to be unsuitable would be retired on pension. The former exclusiveness was to be swept away. Efficiency was to be the keynote of the future.

No less important was the divorce of the Foreign Service from the Home Civil Service. During his previous association with the Foreign Office, Eden had experienced the effects of the old faulty organization. Sir Warren Fisher, as head of the Civil Service, had asserted his right to intervene in the conduct of the department. He advanced the claim that all papers circulated by the Foreign Secretary to the Cabinet must first be submitted for his approval. He also claimed the authority to supervise any adjustments in the organization of the department to meet the needs of the times. The effect of Fisher's fettering influence was to handicap the working of the machinery during the Thirties and to prevent vital information from reaching the Cabinet. Leading figures in the Diplomatic Service attributed to these arrangements and their paralysing consequences the blunders and miscalculations in British policy in the decade before the war.

The old system was now ended. The Head of the Civil Service was deprived of the authority to intervene. The independence of

the Foreign Service was established. The Foreign Secretary was made master in his own house.

At midsummer 1941 Hitler launched his attack in Eastern Europe and thereby ended Britain's period of glorious isolation. With no more delay than was needed for the preparation of his speech, Winston Churchill announced Britain's acceptance of Russia as an ally. It is to be noted that no Cabinet was needed, not so much as an informal meeting of Ministers, for this historic decision.

Churchill was never in doubt as to the course to take. Any enemy of Hitlerism was his ally. Eden had long advocated an association with the Russians. As reports had come in of German military preparations in Eastern Europe, he had invited Maisky to see him at the Foreign Office and placed the accumulating evidence before him. Churchill had addressed a personal letter of warning to Stalin, but the Russian Ministers, their diplomats and their generals had been taken by surprise when the German attack was launched.

Eden was spending the week-end at Chequers. After a few telephone conversations with Cabinet Ministers, Churchill devoted the day to the composition of the speech he broadcast that evening to the listening world. Eden hurried back to the Foreign Office to meet Maisky. Arrangements were quickly made for the despatch of military and economic missions to Moscow, and for the Russians to send a military mission to London. The efforts of the two nations must be co-ordinated for the defeat of the common enemy.

Churchill's announcement of the acceptance of Russia as an ally was heartily endorsed by the people, but informed opinion was sceptical of the military value of the new ally. The Red Army might or might not prove that it could fight and one commentator expressed a general view when he made the questioning comparison, "The Poles fought eighteen days—can Stalin do better than this?"

It fell to Eden to commend the new ally to the House of Commons in a speech much lower in its key than the Churchill broadcast. The House and the country, he said, would wish to take a severely practical view of these matters. The attack on Russia was to be regarded as a prelude to the resumption of Hitler's main purpose to overthrow the British Empire.

"We keep our eye on the target," Eden said, "that target is

Hitler's Germany. Let us pay him the compliment of understanding that he too keeps his eye on the target, and that target is the British Empire, which he rightly regards as the chief obstacle in his path of world dominion. The invasion of Russia is a means not an end. Through his Russian attack Hitler hopes to break the military power of that vast state and then free himself from any contemporary or subsequent Eastern anxiety when he turns to his duel with our own land." From these words it is to be deduced that the Foreign Office and its chief founded no exaggerated hopes on the chances of Russia's survival.

As to our relations with Russia, Eden recalled the joint statement that had been made at the time he met Stalin in 1935. It had then been declared that there was no conflict of interest between the two governments on any of the main issues of international policy. "I have always," he added, "believed that those words expressed a plain statement of fact and that the relations of our two countries would gain from their mutual acceptance. The political systems of our countries are antipathetic, our ways of life are widely divergent, but this cannot and must not for a moment obscure the realities of the political issue which confronts us to-day. This country has probably fewer Communists than any nation in Europe. We have always hated the creed. That is not the issue. Russia has been wantonly and treacherously invaded. The Russians to-day are fighting for their soil. They are fighting the man who seeks to dominate the world. That also is our sole task."

From midsummer to the winter's snows the people of Britain followed the course of the war in Eastern Europe with mounting suspense and admiration. The Russians suffered reverses, destruction of armies, and loss of territory and industrial resources that no other state could have survived. In their hour of need the Russians were offered every aid that could be made to them by Britain and by the United States under the Lend-Lease Scheme. To the chagrin of Churchill and his Ministers, aid was grudgingly received, and demands for more were importunately pressed. An Anglo-American supply mission travelled to Moscow and, backed by Beaverbrook's exuberant friendliness, succeeded in melting something of Moscow's coolness. But difficulties persisted. Stalin's importunities and complaints persisted to the point where an indignant Prime Minister declined to answer his letters.

The Soviet Ambassador called at the Foreign Office to present his master's explanations. Maisky expressed Stalin's wishes in conciliatory terms. Eden reported to the Prime Minister that Stalin was seeking a complete exchange of views for the co-ordination of action, not merely in the conduct of the war, but in the post-war organization of peace. It was agreed that a British mission should proceed to Moscow. Eden, with his previous experience, was the obvious choice as its head. Churchill put forward the proposal in a telegram to the Kremlin. Stalin accepted with alacrity in a cordial message.

Between the arrangements and the visit, the prospects of the war were dramatically changed. The Japanese struck at Pearl Harbour, bringing the United States into the war. Churchill immediately arranged to cross the Atlantic for a meeting with Roosevelt.

Eden, by that time, was on his way to a Scottish port to board a warship to take him to Russia. At Invergordon a telephone call informed him of Churchill's imminent departure. His immediate thought was to return at once to Whitehall—it was not desirable that both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary should be absent from the country. Churchill, however, pressed him to proceed. The fact that the United States was a free belligerent and ally, actively engaged in the war, would strengthen the hands of the British mission in Moscow. Eden accordingly set out on one of the most difficult missions of his career.

Leaving Scapa in mid-December, he sailed by the Northern route to Murmansk in H.M.S. *Kent*. He was accompanied by the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff (General Nye) and by Cadogan from the Foreign Office. It was an unpleasant journey. Describing his experiences later he said: "We drove through wintry seas and at one time we had tons of ice on board. I was glad when we rounded the North Cape and were sailing along the Murmansk coast. It was snowing hard in the dim half light of the Arctic noon, where the sun never rises above the horizon in the winter months, when we landed on Soviet soil. A detachment of Russian soldiers was drawn up on the shore. They were a grand type of man, dressed in their warm sheepskin coats, a much more practical uniform than the ersatz clothing and the sweepings of Goebbels' jumble sale in which Hitler's armies have to retreat

through the Russian snows. These Russian soldiers were flanked by officers carrying the Union Jack and the Hammer and the Sickle. The yellow ochre of the uniforms, the bright splashes of colour of the two flags against the snow-covered hills, the uncanny twilight at mid-day, the silence of falling snow, all these formed a most impressive setting for our landing on Soviet soil. But it was friendly. Indeed the courtesy and friendliness was typical of our welcome at every stage of the journey."

Flying conditions were so bad that they had to complete the journey by train. They came for the first time really to appreciate the meaning of a Russian winter. When the train made an occasional stop they stepped outside into the sudden chill of 58 degrees of frost. As they shivered in their great-coats, Eden thought of Hitler's soldiery, exposed without protection to these Arctic conditions, perishing as Napoleon's had perished before them.

The welcome to the Kremlin was cordial, but Eden was dismayed by the proposals the Russians placed before him. They would have involved the underwriting of the post-war frontiers of Russia and the Soviet programme for post-war Europe. Stalin had learned the Hitler technique. He was ready to sign an Anglo-Soviet agreement, but this was made dependent on the fulfilment of the preliminary condition of acceptance by Britain of Russia's future frontiers, together with the absorption by Russia of the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia) that had been subjugated at the beginning of the war.

Three meetings were held with Stalin. The talks covered a wide range. Military projects were discussed. Questions were put by Stalin about the opening of a second front by Britain. Eden raised the question of a declaration of war by the Soviet Union against Japan. Always Stalin returned to the problem that for him was fundamental—the post-war territories of Europe. Eden declined to commit himself. Before any commitments could be entered upon, Britain would need to take the views of the Dominions and of the United States.

Eden reported at length to the Prime Minister, then crossing the Atlantic in the new battleship, the *Duke of York*. Churchill replied praising the Foreign Secretary for the admirable discretion he had shown in declining to be drawn into the making of wrongful promises. There could be no question of Britain agreeing to any

arrangement about the Baltic States. It would be time enough to start talking of frontiers when we had won the war.

Eden and members of his party were conducted to the fighting front. They were impressed by evidence of the Russian spirit, and of the confidence and resolution of the people. Hitler, by his sudden attack, had conferred on the Russians a unity not previously achieved under their own masters, in a crusade to rid their land of the last German.

On the front, in the neighbourhood of Ulin, between Moscow and Leningrad, the British visitors were on the scene of fighting in which, in the last few days, the invaders had been driven back. By the road were bodies of dead Germans and the wreckage of tanks. Eden talked with some of the German prisoners, not much more than boys, ill-clad, suffering from the bitter cold. Their overcoats were of light material, their tunics thin, they had no gloves to wear and they tried to pull down their cardigan sleeves to protect their frozen fingers. The contrast between these wretched youths and the Russian soldiery in their magnificent spirits was encouraging. The visitors returned with a new feeling of confidence in their Russian allies.

Little progress was possible in Moscow towards the conclusion of the formal Anglo-Soviet agreement. Eden explained that we were not yet strong enough to launch a second front. Stalin did not consider himself strong enough to be involved with Japan. The obstacle of the frontier question remained. Nevertheless the meetings ended in a friendly atmosphere.

On the voyage home Eden was accompanied by a delegation of Russian trades union leaders. They had been invited to tour Britain by the leaders of the Trades Union Congress and to see for themselves the vast efforts of British workers in the munition factories. Reporting to the House of Commons four days later, he expressed the belief that the march of events was bringing the nations together in closer association. "It is the task of statesmanship," he said, "to ensure that the future is a happy one for the peoples of both countries, is a victorious one for the Allied war effort, and is an enduring one for the peace of the world."

Back at his desk he prepared a full memorandum on the discussions. It is not without interest to recall the proposals Stalin had submitted to him for post-war Europe. He suggested:

The restoration of Austria as an independent State;
The detachment of the Rhineland from Prussia as an independent State;
The transfer of East Prussia to Poland;
The return of the Sudetenland to a Czechoslovakia with pre-war frontiers;
The restoration of an independent Yugoslavia, enlarged by certain territories from Italy;
The constitution of Albania as an independent State.

Eden's second visit to Moscow proved to be of greater value than seemed likely at the time he was presenting a stubborn negative to Stalin. Relations between the two governments improved in cordiality thereafter and the talks paved the way to the conclusion of a treaty of alliance. After his return, the Russians made several attempts to obtain British endorsement for their post-war plans. Churchill's opposition was worn down and he would have given way, with reluctance, over the Baltic States, but here Roosevelt and his advisers were not to be moved from their opposition.

Eden had difficulty in producing the text of an agreement that would satisfy the Kremlin. Two drafts were submitted, neither of which was accepted. As a final step Stalin sent Molotov to London to negotiate in person. He and his staff of diplomatic and military advisers arrived by Russian bomber and, after appropriate greetings, were taken to Chequers, which the Prime Minister placed at their disposal. Seven meetings were held either at Number Ten or at the Foreign Office. A friendly atmosphere prevailed, but obstacles to an agreement remained.

When the deadlock seemed to be impenetrable, Eden submitted a fresh proposition. Instead of the military and territorial agreement that had been under discussion he proposed a Treaty of Alliance to operate for twenty years. There was no reference in it to the controversial matter of frontiers and territories. It was submitted to Stalin and, after minor alterations, was accepted.

With appropriate ceremony the signing of the Alliance was concluded at the Foreign Office on May 26. Eden's room was flooded by the lights of cinematographs. He sat with Churchill beside him with other members of the Government. Molotov was flanked by his own delegation, Maisky and members of the Soviet

Embassy staff. There were short speeches and toasts were drunk in honour of the occasion. Stalin cabled his good wishes. Winston appropriately replied.

In a brief speech Eden remarked that never before in the history of two countries had so close an association existed. "Part of our work," he added, "lies behind us, but the greater part is ahead. There is the war to win, there is the peace to build. Upon the co-operation of the Soviet Union, the United States of America and the British Commonwealth the future of mankind will largely depend."

The Foreign Secretary commended the Alliance to the House of Commons. He emphasized the importance of the co-operation of the Soviet Union with Great Britain when the fighting was over. The two countries had agreed to work together for the organization of the security and the economic prosperity of Europe. In so doing they had pledged themselves to take into account the interests of the United Nations and to be guided by the two principles of not seeking territorial aggrandisement for themselves, and of not interfering in the internal affairs of other states.

As he grappled, in later years, with the problems in world affairs that have arisen from the search after territorial aggrandisement and from the interference in the affairs of other states, Eden must sometimes have looked back with mild wonderment on the terms of the treaty to which Russia put her signature in the summer of 1942, during the midsummer of cordiality in Anglo-Soviet relations.

CHAPTER XVI

FRANK TALKS WITH ROOSEVELT

THE negotiations with the Russians and the exchanges with Washington that followed gave a new direction to the work of the Foreign Secretary. The tide of war had not yet begun to turn in favour of the Allies. Many months of bitter fighting lay ahead. But already some reckoning must be taken with the problems of the post-war world. What was being done in the midst of war would determine the future when peace returned. The extent to which we succeeded or failed in co-operating with the Allies would be a decisive factor in post-war policy.

In the background of his mind, in these days, was the conviction that close association of the powers and the integration of policy that had been brought about by the necessity of war must be preserved after hostilities were ended for the establishment of a new world order of peace. There would be no room for isolation, no room for selfish policies or unneighbourly policies. There would be one village street from Edinburgh to Chungking. Never again could Britain follow a course of isolation. The British people must be prepared to assume the burdens of leadership.

As he meditated on the blue-prints of the future, suggestions came from Washington where officials of the State Department were envisaging a world in which the main feature would be the co-operation of four great powers—Britain, Russia, the United States of America and China. These four powers, when the war was over, would have a virtual monopoly of armed strength. That strength must be used in the name of the United Nations to prevent a repetition of aggression, German aggression.

Eden agreed that the basic fact in the post-war world would be the dominant position and authority of these four powers. He drew up a memorandum for the War Cabinet on the Four-Power Plan, in which the supreme direction of world affairs would have come from a four-power council, and he elaborated the idea before the House of Commons. "I do not visualize a world in which those

powers try to clamp down some form of big power dictatorship over everybody else, but they must use their strength to prevent aggression. Other powers, be they great, be they small, provided they are willing to play their part well, must be secured in the enjoyment of that independence for which they have fought and suffered."

There would be need for some new world organization to ensure peace. From the experience of the past he drew the conclusion that the League of Nations had failed, not because its machinery was faulty, but because it had lacked representation and drive behind it.

The Foreign Secretary's conception of a four-power council did not commend itself to the Prime Minister. He countered with a memorandum that was short and shattering. Where Eden foresaw a concert of the major powers, Churchill hoped for a Council of Europe and he championed Europe, "parent continent of modern nations' civilization". In speculation concerning the future, we could not foresee what sort of a Russia and what Russian demands we should have to face. The Chungking government of China could scarcely rank as a world-power and there was the warning that it would represent a "faggot vote on the side of the United States in any attempt to liquidate the British Overseas Empire". Of course, we should have to work with the Americans in many ways, but our prime care was Europe. It would be a measureless disaster were Russian barbarism to overlay the culture and independence of the ancient states of the Continent. His hope was that the European family would act unitedly and that a United States of Europe would arise. On this theme Winston became eloquent and visionary. He ended with a curt dismissal of the future and its problems—"Unhappily the war has prior claims on your attention and on mine."

No man bearing Churchill's burdens could detach himself from the present to speculate about the hypothetical possibilities of peace. But even in the midst of the storms of war, the Foreign Secretary could not summarily dismiss the future from his reckoning. The State Department at Washington had been agitated by the knowledge of Russian aspirations.

Early in 1943 arrangements were made for Eden to visit Washington for consultation with the President and the Secretary

of State, Cordell Hull, who had been excluded from the Casablanca conference a few weeks previously. The President had wanted to be free from the influence of his Secretary of State. Since Hull could scarcely be kept back in Washington were his opposite number from Britain to be present in North Africa, the exclusion of Eden was unavoidable. Churchill had pressed for his attendance, and gave way to the President with reluctance.

In February, Winston proposed that Eden should cross the Atlantic. Roosevelt replied with a cordial welcome: "That is an excellent thought about Anthony Eden. Delighted to have him, the sooner the better." At the last moment his departure had to be put off. The Prime Minister was taken seriously ill, pneumonia developed and the Foreign Secretary could not leave London. Thanks to the recently discovered benefits of M. & B. the "world's worst patient", brow-beaten by King and President into obeying doctor's orders, made an excellent recovery. In March, Eden was able to leave for America.

Before his departure, Maisky called to see him to express Russia's concern that no definite commitments should be entered into during the Washington discussions. Eden assured him that the conversations would be entirely exploratory. The ambassador also raised the question of Churchill's plan for a United States of Europe, remarking that the Soviet Government did not view this with enthusiasm. Eden argued that the very smallness of some states made federation all the more desirable, politically and militarily, as well as economically. Maisky thought that his Government would not oppose a Balkan federation if it excluded Roumania, and a Scandinavian federation excluding Finland.

According to the preliminary exchanges, the scope of the Washington discussions was to be limited to the most effective method of "preparing for meetings between the Governments of the United Nations to consider questions arising out of the war". In fact he talked with the President, with rambling discursiveness, on problems and possibilities of the post-war world. Where Winston concentrated on the military strategy and the immediate operations of the war, Roosevelt's mind played with ideas in preparation for the Peace Conference that would decide the world's destinies when the guns had ceased to fire. World statesmen assembled around the peace-table was the expectation generally accepted on the basis of

what had happened in 1918, and leaders amongst the statesmen began to prepare for the occasion.

Eden arrived in Washington on March 12, and stayed until March 30. He had a succession of meetings with the President, at tea and dinner, and passed a week-end at the White House. On some occasions the Secretary of State was present, but Roosevelt saw to it that there was opportunity for informal exchanges over the tea-cups or the dinner-table, when only Harry Hopkins was there to listen.

All American sources are agreed that Eden scored a success in the personal relationship he established with Roosevelt who, during the first week, reported enthusiastically to Winston—"Anthony has spent three evenings with me. He is a grand fellow. We are talking about everything from Ruthenia to the production of peanuts. It is an interesting fact that we seem to agree on about 95 per cent of all subjects—not a bad average. He seems to think you will manage rather well with the leadership of the House of Commons —but both of us are concerned over what you will do at the Foreign Office! We fear that he will not recognize it when he gets back." The good impression held to the close. Hopkins wrote that the visit had been a great success—"Everyone likes him and we have made a thorough and frank exploration of everything with which the United Nations are concerned." The President appreciated Eden's frankness and admired his wide knowledge of affairs.

According to the American records of the talks, identity of views between Foreign Secretary and President could scarcely have maintained the 95 per cent unanimity. On China, for instance, there were divergences. The President's conception of post-war arrangements was based on the idea of the Four-Power Plan outlined by Eden in his memorandum to the War Cabinet. He was convinced that for many years to come the four Powers would have to police the world. Eden, following Churchill's opposition, demurred over China. The President spoke insistently on China's membership of the United Nations.

Eden left the impression with his hearers that Britain would be "pretty sticky over their former possessions in the Far East". The President suggested once or twice that as a gesture of "goodwill" Britain should give up Hong Kong. When he hinted at a

number of similar gestures Britain might make, Eden drily remarked that he had not heard the President make suggestions for any similar gestures on the part of the United States.

At one point Eden raised the question of presidential powers to carry out proposed commitments in the future. This was a reminder of the difficulties that, twenty years before, had been caused by the repudiation by Congress of President Wilson's undertakings. The problem was submitted to the constitutional experts who advised that on the particular point involved the President held the necessary authority. It is an indication of Eden's tact that he could have raised so delicate an issue without giving offence.

Reading the opinions then expressed in the light of after knowledge, one is struck by the limitations of statesmen, even the most experienced, in foreseeing the future course of events. Thus there was the President pronouncing on Poland—"After all, the big powers will have to decide what Poland should have (in the way of territory) and I do not intend to go to the Peace Conference and bargain with Poland or the other small states; as far as Poland is concerned the important thing is to set it up in a way that will help to maintain the peace of the world."

While Churchill nourished his vision of a United States of Europe, the President's ideas ran on a powerless Europe. Countries like France and Poland should be disarmed, he considered. After Germany had been disarmed, what was the reason for France to have to have a big military establishment?

Eden foresaw that Russia would prove to be the most difficult problem of the future. In detail some of his suggestions were to prove wide of the mark. From Poland, he thought, Russia would demand very little territory, possibly up to the Curzon line. He is also recorded to have expressed the belief that Stalin wanted a second front in Europe largely for political reasons—that if Germany were to collapse, Stalin had no desire to take the full responsibility for what would happen in Germany or the rest of Europe. He believed, a purely personal opinion, it was a fixed matter of Russian policy to have both British and United States troops heavily engaged in Europe when the German collapse came.

The visit ended with a dinner at which Eden was Hull's guest at the Carlton Hotel. Afterwards he sat up into the small hours reviewing with Harry Hopkins the results of his trip. He felt that it

had been altogether worth while, particularly as it had given him the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with the President and with the Secretary of State. In the widely ranging conversations there were few controversial points that had not been touched upon.

In addition to the President and members of his entourage, Eden was able to meet many prominent figures including ex-President Hoover, Wendell Wilkie and La Guardia, New York's mayor. He spent some days visiting American forces and was impressed by the evidence of dauntless determination that he found from Washington to the Deep South. He also took part in an ancestral celebration in Maryland.

Both Winston and his Foreign Secretary found occasion during the war to speak with becoming pride of the American element in their ancestry. With an American mother, the Prime Minister, of course, held the advantage. Eden's connection with America sprang from his ancestor, Sir Robert Eden, the Governor of Maryland, who had married Caroline Calvert, daughter of Lord Baltimore.

Accompanied by Halifax, Anthony Eden attended a meeting of the Maryland Legislature at Annapolis. Standing beneath a picture of his great-great-grandfather the Governor, he delivered a speech that was relayed to all the State Legislatures of the United States meeting in special session to listen to him.

"First let me say," he began, "that I feel at home here. From my earliest years I have been steeped in the atmosphere of Maryland. It is a keen personal pleasure to stand on the spot where Robert Eden once stood. A few miles away, in the City Hall at Baltimore, now hang the pictures of the Calvert family from which I am proud to be descended. They are friendly faces which I recognize from my childhood days when they looked down on me from the walls of my father's house. I am even prouder of the fact that one of the Calverts, the third Lord Baltimore, was the prime mover in the great Act of 1649 by which the early settlers were assured of full freedom to worship God according to their conscience. That was nearly three hundred years ago, but our times have given a new significance to that event."

Reviewing, thereafter, the contributions the American people were making to the common cause, he referred to the inspiring

sight offered in a scarred and blacked-out London of the youth of the world united in the defence of freedom. "Your young men and ours rub shoulders with each other and with the young men of the nations united against a common enemy. They achieve in a short space that natural sympathy and understanding which years of diplomatic exchanges could never give. May they cherish in friendship what they have learnt in war. Upon them and their like, upon their friendship with one another rests both the burden and the hope of mankind. Where our generation failed, I pray that theirs may succeed. It may be our last chance. It may be in very truth the 'last best hope of earth'."

When the speech was ended, the House of Delegates of Maryland passed a resolution paying tribute to the virtues of America's "valiant Britannic ally" and expressing to the British people, through their Foreign Secretary, Maryland's desire to "emulate their greatness". Maryland had indeed made honourable amends to the Eden of the twentieth century for the unfortunate incidents in which his forbear of the eighteenth century had been slighted.

From Washington, Eden went north to Ottawa where he was given a reception that in warmth of welcome resembled that given to the Prime Minister a few months previously. Eden also was invited to address a joint session of the Canadian Parliament and he, too, as a compliment to French-speaking Canadians, delivered passages of his speech in the French language, declaring his faith in France's future—"Toute ma vie j'ai cru à la grandeur de la France; ma foi dans son avenir est aujourdhui inébranlable."

CHAPTER XVII

THE CAUSE OF POLAND AND GREECE

IN the month of May 1943, in the absence of Sir Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden addressed the Conservative Party Conference (May 20). Three years before, in that month of May, he had taken office in the Coalition Government as Britain was about to be left alone and unsupported to face the force of Hitler. The prospect had been transformed. The Battles of the Desert had been won. The last German had been rounded up in North Africa. In the East, the tide had turned at Stalingrad and the Russians had begun the long drive to the West that was to carry them to Berlin.

As he took his place at the conference of the party Eden had cause for pride in the successes that had crowned the anxious labours of the years that lay in the gloom of the past. It was a moment when it was "proper to rejoice". He could, too, find reason for satisfaction in his own personal fortunes.

His work had gained for him the confidence of his colleagues and the appreciation of his leader. He was the Prime Minister's closest colleague, the sharer of his most intimate secrets, his lieutenant-in-chief and his successor designate. With becoming modesty he might plead for sympathy in the arduous role of understudying "a man who cannot be understudied". But his presence in that role marked his position as political heir-at-law to the leader whom, at his call, the delegates rose to cheer as the greatest Englishman of their time.

Having surveyed the achievements and the unfolding of success with which Providence had rewarded the efforts of the Allies, he turned to the future and its difficulties with which, as Foreign Secretary, he was intimately and perplexingly faced. He hinted at problems of an immensity that almost daunted him, of a task to be faced after the war more baffling and more complex than in 1918. The words were greeted with sympathetic murmurs of encouragement. For all the formality of the phrasing, there was some sense of anxiety behind the words. Victories that mark the end of

military operations are the starting point for the labours of the statesman and the diplomat.

In the two years that lay ahead the Foreign Secretary was to be arduously engaged in the campaigns for peace. One conference succeeded another—Quebec, Moscow, Teheran, Moscow, Yalta, San Francisco. Weeks of preliminary spade-work, days and nights of discussion and controversy, cases to be stated, replies answered, claims advanced, counter-claims resisted in negotiation with amicable Americans and with obdurate Russians, masters in dialectics, negative, unyielding, and frequently ungracious. Each state of Europe presented its perplexities—the affairs of Italy, the government of Greece, the future of the Balkan States, the carve-up of Germany. As a background there was the ever continuing burbling from the rival voices of France, the plaints of the temperamental de Gaulle.

Looming over all was the persistent problem of Poland. It is beyond calculation how many man-hours were devoted by Eden, Churchill and their advisers, by Roosevelt and Truman, with their staffs to the future of the Poles. Here was the original quarrel from which the war sprang. We had taken to arms in defence of Poland. When all was done the Poles were seen to have been saved from the Germans to be submerged by the Soviet. Not all the arguments so persistently advanced by Eden and Churchill, not all the submissions and the remonstrances and expostulations had been of avail. Poland, immediate occasion of the war, was first among the causes of the break between Russia and the democracies.

The good spirits that prevailed at the time of the Conservative Party Conference in May continued at a high level throughout the summer. Sicily was invaded. Mussolini fell from power. The capitulation of Italy was at hand.

In August there were approaches from the Italians as Churchill left for the Quebec Conference. Two days later Eden was informed that an emissary from Badoglio was ready to negotiate. What was to be done about this; were we to insist on unconditional surrender? Messages passed between Whitehall and the Prime Minister, then at sea, and the President. The Prime Minister's first terse comment was "Don't miss the bus." Eden drew up a reply, demanding unconditional surrender in the terms of honourable capitulation. There were further toings and froings before the agreement was reached and Italy swopped horses in mid-war.

The Quebec Conference, that Eden attended in its final phase, advanced the co-ordination of military plans between the British and Americans to the point where Stalin must be brought in. Throughout the autumn there were exchanges with Moscow and, as a preliminary, a meeting between the three Foreign Ministers was arranged. Cordell Hull gallantly undertook, despite his years, to make the long trip to Moscow to join Eden and Molotov.

When the agenda was being drawn up the Americans put forward four subjects for discussion and the British twelve. The Russians named one topic alone—measures to shorten the war. Eden was quickly enlightened about Russian views. There was one subject that aroused their interest and one alone—the opening of a second front in France.

Relations between the British and Russians, proceeding with the alternations of a see-saw, had fallen to a low level at the time of this Moscow meeting. The Russians had surpassed their own record for unpleasantness. Churchill had refused to accept a particularly outrageous communication from the Kremlin. The trouble had arisen over convoys carrying arms for the Russians by way of the Northern route, operations of great hazard in Arctic waters.

This was the first tangle that Eden was required to straighten out. On arrival at Moscow he had received a telegram of encouragement and support from Winston—"I feel so much for you in the bleak conference and I wish I were with you." The Russians, however, conscious that they had blustered too boldly, were by then in a conciliatory temper.

There was some plain speaking with Stalin. In the course of a two-hours' interview he received extended instruction in naval operations. The Russian, to use Churchill's phrase, is a land animal, and imagination is stimulated by the picture of Stalin sitting listening to his interpreter repeating Eden's lesson about the tactics and perils of the war at sea. Provision of naval escort for the convoys was a great strain. Each convoy was a major operation. To provide the necessary cruisers and destroyers British naval strength in the Atlantic had, perforce, to be reduced. This exposed our shipping to greater risks in the unceasing battle with the U-boat, a struggle that was still a "closely run thing".

To drive his points home Eden produced a table on U-boats operating in the Atlantic month by month over the period of the

war. The figure was still near the peak. Stalin examined it with apparent interest. He listened with evidence of sympathy to the explanations given to him, nodding from time to time in appreciation of the points that were made. Finally, he replied that he did not underestimate the difficulties of the convoy system. The challenge he had made was against the supposition that under the agreement that had been concluded the Russians had no claim to expect the despatch of convoys. In the Russian view it was an obligation, not an act of charity on the part of the British.

After two hours, misunderstandings were cleared away. Stalin was assured that the British were not despatching supplies to him out of favour or charity. He offered assurances that he had not intended to cause hurt to the Prime Minister by impugning his good faith. So the matter ended and the resumption of the convoys was arranged. The December sailing was marked by a clash with the battle-cruiser *Scharnhorst* which, in the twilight of the Arctic winter, was engaged by the *Duke of York* and sunk. It was a gratifying sequel to Stalin's course of naval instruction.

Two British merchant seamen confined to a Russian prison owed their freedom to the Foreign Secretary's intervention on their behalf. They had been given stiff sentences for assault on a Russian Communist leader. Eden was shocked to learn of their fate. It was utterly repugnant for him to think of allowing these men to languish in a Russian gaol while accepting the hazards of the war at sea on behalf of other British seamen in future convoys. He made representations to Molotov who, as an indication of his goodwill, arranged for the release of the two men.

The formal meetings of Foreign Secretaries and their attendant staffs proceeded under Molotov's chairmanship. On few matters were concrete results achieved but where agreement was not possible understanding was reached. The Russians sought a definitely pledged date for "Overland", the invasion of France. Eden had to report the Prime Minister's objections to being tied by the precise terms of a lawyer's agreement. The Russians wanted Turkey and Sweden to be forced into the war as combatants. The Prime Minister was aware of the advantages but was not prepared to apply more than persuasion to Turk or Swede.

The Russians were but mildly interested in the side-shows. "Overland" was their exclusive interest. They were "blindly set"

on the Allied invasion of Northern France. Eden was pressed for an undertaking that the operation would not be delayed beyond the early summer. His messages to London brought communications from the Prime Minister and from Eisenhower on the strategic prospects on the Italian front. These served to increase rather than allay Russian anxieties. Having suffered much from Soviet importunities, Churchill, it may be, was not averse from leaving Stalin in suspense, or so it might be concluded.

There was a final meeting with Stalin. Nothing could have been more friendly. He discussed strategy in Italy. He applauded the idea for landings in the South of France at the time of the invasion in the North. His understanding of naval operations advanced to an appreciation of the need for landing craft. But always he returned to the essential point—was "Overland" going to be postponed and, if so, by one month or two months?

During their stay at Moscow, Eden had succeeded in penetrating the reserve of the American Secretary of State. Cordell Hull came to appreciate Eden's qualities. In his memoirs, he paid the following tribute to the British Minister:

> With Foreign Secretary Eden my relations were in general most satisfactory. He possessed an agreeable personality and a high order of intelligence. He was always on the alert when any matter pertaining to Great Britain or peace was involved. In a few instances, as in the case of de Gaulle, we had more opposition from him than from Mr. Churchill; but we could usually count on his understanding, and at the Moscow Conference I found him thoroughly co-operative and broad-minded. I considered Eden a person of unusual promise in the political field, barring the changes of fortune implicit in politics.

Reporting home on the results of his mission, Eden was able to say that the conference that had begun with such bleak prospects had ended surprisingly well. The Russians had given signs of their intentions to open a new chapter in their relations with the Allies of the West. To close the conference with a gesture of goodwill he suggested that the Russians should be given a share in the lately surrendered Italian fleet. To this the Prime Minister secured the approval in principle of the War Cabinet.

One practical outcome of the discussions of the Foreign Ministers was the forming of a European Advisory Committee, with

headquarters in London, to work on plans for dealing with Germany when victory had been won. It was this Committee that first drew up the scheme for the division of Germany into zones for Allied occupation, a major source of trouble in the post-war Europe.

After a cordial leave-taking, Eden left for home by the southern route through Teheran. On his flight the 'plane, at his request, flew low over historic Stalingrad, city of imperishable fame, scene of indescribable devastation. "Most of us," he said, in describing the experience, "have seen devastated areas in our time, either in this war or in the last. But none of us in that aeroplane had ever seen destruction on such a scale. Every house must have been a fortress, every street a battle-ground. There can have been no encounter more fierce in human history and few, if any, more evidently costly in human life. You see for miles and miles mounds of machinery twisted and flung about as though some great giant has been engaged. Then I understood the passionate earnestness which the Russians feel for an early conclusion of the war."

In Cairo, Eden met Turkey's Foreign Minister. In his account of the talks to the House of Commons he stated that views were exchanged on the situation in the light of the Moscow Conference. It sounded well enough, but in fact nothing had been achieved. The Turks were told of the advantages that would accrue were they to join in the war. They appreciated that advantages would in fact result for the Allies, but seeing none for themselves they politely declined to join in. They were not prepared to run what risk there might be in allowing the Allies the use of air bases for attacks on Germany.

Eden was not long in Whitehall before he had to take the air again to fly Eastwards for the meeting of the Big Three in Teheran. By the time he landed at Cairo, President and Prime Minister had already got down to business on the affairs of the Far East with Chiang Kai-Shek. Favourable impressions were formed of these visitors from the Orient. Reporting, later, to the House of Commons the Foreign Secretary said: "By the luck of good weather I arrived when the Prime Minister was entertaining the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of indestructible China and his most gifted wife. It was a most memorable experience when the Prime Minister took his guests and Admiral Mountbatten (Supreme Commander, South East Asia) to the map room, where

for hours we dived deep into war plans and projects. If I may strike a personal note I would say that it is difficult not to be impressed by the Generalissimo even at a first meeting. Under the outward gentleness and gracefulness of this remarkable personality there is a core of supple steel. His is a strength, you feel, that cannot be broken. It can only be bent and then strike back with even greater force. The Generalissimo and the Prime Minister readily understood each other. They speak just the same language of determination. Through that meeting and many subsequent discussions and meetings his wife was there to help us with her sagacious counsel, her unrivalled experience of East and West, and her brilliant gifts as an interpreter."

Allied plans for operations against the Japanese were outlined by Mountbatten. It was because the Russians were not at war with Japan that these discussions were held apart from the meeting of the Big Three.

The Teheran meeting was a conference between principals. They monopolized the stage. Their juniors, experts, and advisers were the crowd forming the appropriate background for the appearance of the leaders in person. Eden was the privileged witness of a great occasion, observer at closest quarters of the interplay of these varied and contrasting personalities—the astute Roosevelt, the subtle Stalin and the Old Incomparable who stood for Britain. In the accounts that have been given of the proceedings there are three incidents that stand out. There was the presentation by the Prime Minister of King George's sword to honour Stalingrad and the moment when Stalin kissed the scabbard in accepting the gift. There was the embarrassing moment, at a Russian banquet, when the Prime Minister walked from the table in momentary dudgeon, having failed to see the joke in some heavy-handed badinage from Stalin. And there was the dinner party that Winston gave on his sixty-ninth birthday when he sat with the President of the United States on his right hand and the master of Russia on his left, a celebration that was no less memorable than those which marked the day when Sir Winston was numbered with the octogenarians.

The Teheran talks were carried through with no dimming of the radiance of goodwill exuded by all the parties. It was the high-water-mark of cordiality in Anglo-Russian relations. The major

decision had been confirmed that the invasion of Northern France should take place in the month of May.

Back in Cairo, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary met the President and Foreign Secretary of Turkey. The case for Turkey's entry into the war was again pressed but with no greater effect than had attended Eden's discussions a month previously.

It fell to the Foreign Secretary to present an account to the House of Commons of the Teheran Conference, the Prime Minister being incapacitated by a further attack of pneumonia. Eden spoke on a note of restrained confidence and optimism. On his return from the Foreign Secretaries' conference he had expressed his conviction that the foundations had been laid for collaboration with the Soviet Union. Teheran began where the work of Moscow left off. But the Teheran Conference, being a conference of leaders, carried a still more stirring message to the world. The closest military co-ordination had been reached. Every plan was agreed. The timing was agreed. In due course the decisions of Teheran would be unrolled on the fields of battle.

With the New Year of 1944 all thoughts and plans and hopes were concentrated on D-Day and the greatest amphibious operation in the history of war. Considerations of moon and tide had caused the date to be postponed to the first week in June. In May the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth assembled in London.

Ministers of Empire have never held more harmonious meetings. Eden won the general praise for his share in this happy result. Thus the Prime Minister in the course of a House of Commons debate observed—"Nothing was more remarkable than the complete agreement that was expressed by every one of the Dominion Prime Ministers on the general conduct of foreign affairs and on the principles which govern that conduct and, I should add, on the skill and consistency with which they have been treated by the Foreign Secretary."

Eden himself was moved once more to reflect on the British Commonwealth as constituting the one really successful experiment in international co-operation ever made. What was the secret of it, what was the unifying force behind it? It was strange, indefinable. The links holding the Commonwealth together sometimes appeared to be so frail that they would snap at first pressure. The

demonstration of the reality of its strength had come twice in a generation. For the motive force behind the deep loyalty of its constituent peoples towards the Empire, all he could offer by way of explanation was that like all the really deep forces that moved mankind it had an element of mystery.

The hour of the supreme effort was now at hand. The armada was massed for the assault on France. With the conclusion of all the months of preparation the event rested with the fighting forces. The statesmen gave place to the general. Not even Churchill himself, denied by royal decree to take a grandstand view of operations from a participating warship, could do more than join Eisenhower at his headquarters in the woodlands near Portsmouth. Eden and other Ministers were of the party.

During the hours of suspense, before the start of the most famous Channel crossing since the arrival of conquering William from Normandy, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were required to deal with General de Gaulle in his most temperamental aspect. For reasons of security he had not been informed until the eve of the imminence of the expedition. He arrived by 'plane from North Africa. When told that France's liberation was about to begin his resentment at being excluded from the secret was barely held in check.

There followed a renewal of the claims that had been pressed before on Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary over de Gaulle's place in the administration of his country when freed from the Germans. Disputes between de Gaulle and Giraud had been the despair of Whitehall and Washington. The Ministers tried to smooth his ruffled plumage. Eden reasoned with him, Churchill spoke bluntly, Eisenhower added his courteous efforts. He was not to be placated. Disdaining offers of hospitality he withdrew, stately and aloof. It was disturbing but it provided the diversion of relief.

D-Day was a triumph for the planners and for the fighting forces. During the days of stubborn fighting in the summer of 1944, we were disturbed, at times, by the checks to the advance of the Allied forces. Seen in retrospect the speed of success appears to have been remarkable. By midsummer, the invaders were firmly established; in July, the Battle of Normandy was won; in August, Paris was freed from the invader. Eden took advantage of the Parliamentary recess to make a tour of the battlefields. To the East

the Russians had continued their relentless hammering back of the Germans.

The tide of military successes brought new and urgent problems and in the autumn Premier and Foreign Secretary were again on their way to Moscow to meet Stalin (October 9).

There were three main subjects for discussion—the frontiers of Poland, the future of the Balkans and the participation of Russia in the war with Japan. Only over Poland were there difficulties. The goodwill of Teheran still persisted. The British visitors were treated as guests of honour. One house was put at the disposal of the Prime Minister, and there was a second for the Foreign Secretary. There were the banquetings inseparable from Russian hospitality and a gala visit to the Opera.

Churchill has described how the affairs of the Balkans were disposed of on a sheet of paper. Greece was to be the special concern of Britain, Roumania and Bulgaria of Russia, with interest shared in Yugoslavia and Hungary. As to Japan, Stalin was ready to join the fight as soon as the Nazis had been disposed of.

On Poland the argument was long continued. What were the frontiers to be? Eden and Molotov bandied place names on the maps. Who was to form Poland's future government? Molotov presented the Lublin Committee. Eden cross-questioned the members. They answered as Soviet puppets and he formed the "worst opinion" of them. There were the London Poles under Mikolajczyk who were not readily acceptable to the Russians. This further instalment of the Polish controversy was not permitted to disturb the prevailing friendliness, but little progress was made.

The British Ministers left for home in good spirits and the highest hopes for the continuance of the spirit of co-operation. If differences could be discussed with such frankness there seemed to be no problems that could not be solved. It was agreed that the Big Three should meet again at no distant date.

Eden broke his homeward flight for a round of visits in the Mediterranean area. First he met the Egyptian Prime Minister and was given assurances of the continuance of Egypt's co-operation under the Treaty of Alliance that he had negotiated in 1936. He flew on to Athens to meet members of the Greek Government, who had pressed him to come to judge for himself of the dire straits of liberated Greece. He was appalled by the scenes of devastation. The

Germans had applied themselves with systematic ruthlessness to wreck the country. All communications, all bridges, all telegraphs had been destroyed. All means of transport, lorries, even mules had been removed. Harbours had been mined, machinery sabotaged in the factories, raw materials carried off or burned.

British shipping and British forces had begun to render first-aid. By sea and air supplies were being hurried in from the stockpile that had been built up for the emergency by the Mediterranean Command. Eden was able to speed the work of relief by arranging for the despatch of hundreds of lorries from the Near East and for the provision of necessities that the emergency measures had not provided for. There was great rejoicing in Athens at the arrival of the first convoy bringing olive oil from the Peloponnese. The humanitarian aspects of Greece's liberation overshadowed, for the moment, the sinister political manœuvrings that were to cause Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary to undertake their sudden journey to Athens a few weeks later.

In November Eden crossed the Channel to take part in the Armistice Day celebrations of the liberation of France. The ceremonial was magnificently staged. De Gaulle and Churchill, splendidly escorted, drove through cheering crowds to the Arc de Triomphe to place wreaths on the tomb of France's Unknown Warrior. For security reasons it was thought necessary to withhold an announcement of Winston's presence, but the news of his coming had become widely known and the multitudes had gathered to pay their tribute to the man from whose voice on the radio they had drawn encouragement to endure their four years of tribulation under the Germans.

Eden was encouraged to think that friendship with France, having survived the past stresses and strains, had emerged the more deeply founded. He noted with relief that the storms that had centred in the figure of de Gaulle had died down, and that the General was accepted as the figure personifying the unity of the French nation.

After the festivities of the luncheon table, at which de Gaulle acclaimed the services of the Prime Minister, there were political discussions. The French, whose troops were once again in the fighting line, had been admitted as members of the European Advisory Commission beside Britain, America and Russia. There

were points to be agreed and Eden met Bidault, outstanding leader of the resistance movement, now Foreign Minister of France. Among the matters touched upon between them was the conclusion of a new treaty between Britain and France.

After the rejoicings in Paris there came the turmoil of Athens. Liberation for the Greeks had begun with the melancholy disorders of civil war. Communist guerillas tried to wrest power from the provisional Government of Papandreov, who lacked the forces to cope with them. The Communists seized the Athens police stations and killed the police who resisted.

It was late in the evening when reports reached Whitehall that the Communists were gaining control of Athens. Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary sat into the early hours discussing the situation. They agreed that British troops must intervene. At three o'clock in the morning Churchill sent the order to General Scobie to take necessary action to hold and dominate Athens. British troops were to shoot if necessary.

It has long since been accepted that the prompt instructions from Churchill, backed by firm measures by the British Commander and his men, prevented Greece from following the Communist trail and being involved in the fate that was to overtake Hungary and Czechoslovakia. At the time, events were viewed differently. There was an outcry against Churchill for abetting Greek reactionaries. The critics were supported by condemnatory leaders in "The Times". The American Press joined in the clamour and United States opinion grew hostile.

The Prime Minister faced his critics in the House of Commons, justifying his action in one of his most vigorously phrased speeches, defiant in tone, in which he made no attempt to placate his opponents. The debate was closed by Eden in a firm but more conciliatory speech. He was able to dispose of his opponents by reason of his easy mastery of his subject. He could identify the precise position of each rival organization in the mosaic of the splinter parties of Greek politics. He could pronounce which was Socialist to the left of British socialism, and which stood to the right of British liberalism without being Tory. So he took the House over the recent course of Greek politics. The British purpose in Greece was first to free the people and next to ensure that they could choose their own form of government. The point on which we did insist was

that the choice should be made by the ballot box, not by the bomb. Against our will we had been involved in Greece's civil war. When it was over and arms had been laid down, then, he hoped, "once again democracy will play its part in the land of its birth".

The Government could dispose convincingly of its critics, but that did not bring peace to Greece. Fighting continued throughout December. At Christmas the Prime Minister decided to make a dramatic intervention. With Eden he cut short his Christmas celebrations and flew out to Athens. The final solution of the Greek troubles was to be found not in the military but in the political field.

The Ministers, leaving behind them the fireside festivities, landed on a well-guarded aerodrome. They passed along the streets in escorted armoured cars. As a precaution, the Prime Minister carried a revolver in his pocket. The Ministers went into conference at the Greek Foreign Office, in a room bleak, ill-lit and cold.

The object was to induce the Greeks to cease fighting and to find an amicable solution of their differences by democratic methods, accepting for the time being an interim régime under a regent. This would give them the opportunity to take a vote on their future—whether they would or would not restore their former King, George the Second of the Hellenes.

For the rôle of Regent, Churchill had been advised to support the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church, Damaskinos by name, who was prepared to combine spiritual and political functions. He came along to preside at the conference, a fine figure of a man, who in his youth had been a champion wrestler. Whatever he might be as a leader of the Church, Damaskinos impressed Churchill as a man of shrewd judgment in politics. There were some stormy discussions between the various Greek leaders, but in the end all agreed to accept the Archbishop as Regent, the Communists alone standing out.

It remained to secure the consent of the King to stand aside while his subjects decided whether he was to return to his throne. The King agreed. By mid-January British forces were in control of Attica and the Communists signed a truce.

Churchill's critics, encouraged by the echoes of American clangour, continued their attacks. Again the Prime Minister faced them in debate and again the Foreign Secretary wound up for the Government. It was the old ground and the old arguments, but a

new Eden, an aspect of the man not often displayed. Rarely in his ten years on the Front Bench had he spoken other than with the voice of reason, breathing the sweet accent of conciliation. Now he surprised the House by his aggressiveness and he showed that, when he wished, he could mix it in debate, hitting out as forcibly as the hardest hitters. He spoke to a running fire of interruptions that in no way embarrassed him.

Seymour Cocks rose but the Minister waved him down. "I have all the notes of the hon. gentleman's speech and I will answer him as I go along." Sir Richard Acland stood up to intervene. He was silenced. "I am going to answer the hon. Baronet's question too. I cannot answer all at once, they come in turn." When Mr. Davies from Merthyr interjected a "By whom", Eden replied: "I am just going to say by whom. The hon. gent. is in a hurry and wants to make my speech for me." Gallacher, the Communist member, fared no better, nor did Aneurin Bevan—"He asks us to be objective in this matter—I have never heard anyone import so much prejudice into the subject of debate."

Summing up in a spirited peroration, Eden declared: "I have had some experience in my life of international affairs and I have never known an issue where I have been more absolutely certain we are right. I am convinced if hon. members had seen what I saw in Athens their reactions would be the same as mine. I am sure that it was our action and only our action, unpopular and difficult as it was, hard as it was to explain to our American friends I admit, that prevented a massacre in Athens. That is my absolute conviction."

The Ministers were given an overwhelming majority, only seven members going into the lobby against them. Long since British and American opinion has come to accept the soundness of their judgment and to praise them for an intervention that stopped the iron curtain from enfolding Greece.

CHAPTER XVIII

YALTA TO POTSDAM

THE end of hostilities was moving near. The German push in the Ardennes had been held. The Rhine had nearly been reached. The Russians were rolling irresistibly on. Budapest had fallen. The end of Hungary was imminent.

As the final collapse loomed close, the solution of the first problems of peace grew pressing. They were never out of Eden's thoughts: What was to be done about Germany? Who was to form Poland's Government? What of Austria and the Balkans? And, the new world organization, how were the rules to be drawn up?

By the time the guns ceased firing, these things needed to be settled and he applied himself to their solution in time for the Yalta Conference, that February, of the Big Three. He approached Yalta as the second act of the piece that had opened at Teheran, a continuation of what had gone before. So, in some sense, it proved to be. It was Teheran with a difference—the same principals as before, but not the same atmosphere.

Roosevelt, of course, was not the same. The man who had left Teheran was now replaced by a frailer, older, undisguisedly failing figure. The Old Incomparable from Britain was unchanged but Stalin was not quite the host he had been before. There was a shade less of cordiality in his manner and the Russians were several shades less easy to negotiate with. So the Big Three took up the threads and settled down to the last full conference of the war. There was a finality about this conference. It was not merely the last conference of the war, it was the last conference between allies working in goodwill for a common purpose. Thereafter there would be meetings in which differences would be more conspicuous than community of purpose.

There is an ironic, almost pathetic quality about those last days of the war and the illusions about the future. President, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary still thought in terms of 1918, of a conference of powers around the peace table arranging the

world's affairs, according to the principles of justice and the declarations of the Atlantic Charter. Germany was still seen as the last enemy to be destroyed, now and in perpetuity. Dwelling on old perils they recked little enough of the new menace to the world's peace, the old menace from the new source.

Throughout the Yalta Conference Eden and Churchill fought the diplomatic battle of Poland. They championed the London Poles against the Lublin puppets, they strove for an independent Poland of ample territories, free to determine its future under its democratically elected rulers. The Big Three discussed Poland at seven out of the eight full sessions of the conference. Between the sessions Eden and Molotov were engaged in the intricacies of controversy over frontiers, the Curzon Line, the future of the Corridor, of Vilna and of Lvov. Finally a joint declaration was drawn up. This provided for the formation of a Polish Government of National Unity and the holding of unfettered elections. Poland's eastern frontier was to follow the Curzon Line and in the West there were to be substantial grants of territory carved from Germany.

When the House of Commons was invited to give approval to this Yalta declaration there were strongly expressed criticisms. British Ministers were accused of having given way to Russian pressure and with having failed the Poles. Why, it was asked, had they not made an end of the Lublin Government. The speeches were strangely divorced from the realities of things. Time was quickly to show that Polish rights and wrongs were not to be enforced by mere speech-making from the British Left against the Russian occupiers of Poland.

Eden dealt patiently and fully with the points of criticism ranging far and wide in history and territory over the involved and controversial issues. In his closing passages he dealt with the position of the Russians and their future intentions, in language that falls strangely on our ears to-day:

"As I listened to some of the speeches I could not help feeling that some of my hon. friends in talking about Poland had not only Poland in mind but the fear that Russia, flushed with the magnificent triumph of her armies, was also dreaming of European domination. This is the constant theme of German propaganda. It is poured out day and night and comes in all sorts of unexpected forms and

guises. It was their theme before the war. It was then the Bolshevik bogey, and how well Hitler used it. I have had plenty of it chucked at me at interviews with Hitler.

"Can anyone doubt that that theme, before the war, was an element in making it difficult for us to establish an understanding with Soviet Russia? Can anyone doubt that if we had had, in 1939, the unity between Russia and this country and the United States that we cemented at Yalta there would not have been this present war? I go further. Can anyone doubt that so long as we hold that unity we can establish peace for twenty-five or fifty years? Unless we hold it there will be no peace. While we must be watchful, active and vigorous and do all in our power to secure the real freedom and independence of our Polish allies, while that is our right and duty, do not let us at the same time fall victims too easily of suspicions of another ally. We have to be on our guard."

Loyalty to the Russian allies could not have been more sincerely demonstrated. But even while Eden was speaking there were indications of the difficulties the Russians were to create in the new Europe. Early in March a Soviet-appointed government had been set up in Roumania. It was the first pulling of the curtain across Europe. Difficulties developed in carrying out the Yalta undertakings concerning Poland. Was democracy for the Poles to be nothing more than the Russian version of democracy? The Prime Minister was alarmed. There were protests to Stalin. Neither in the letter nor in the spirit was the Yalta agreement being honoured. The clouding prospects were darkened by Russian suspicions over the surrender of the Germans on the Anglo-American fronts. Charges and expostulations were exchanged between London and Moscow.

At this difficult moment, President Roosevelt, exhausted by the labours of twelve years in his high office, collapsed suddenly and died (April 12), at his cottage in Warm Springs, Georgia. It was a grievous loss for the free peoples of the world. It deprived Churchill of the wise understanding and the unfailing support that had shared the burden of the Allied cause for long before Pearl Harbour had brought Roosevelt and his country into the war. Harry Truman was to prove himself a worthy successor, no less staunch in freedom's cause, but he entered upon his responsibilities

with limited knowledge and experience of Allied affairs. As Vice-President he had not had the advantage of co-operating with his Chief in the close intimacy of association that had prevailed between Eden and Churchill.

Eden, at the time, was on his way to San Francisco to attend the conference that was to set up the new organization for world peace. The Foreign Secretary paid his last tribute of respect at Roosevelt's funeral. When his body arrived in Washington, it was carried from the station to the White House through streets lined by thousands of sorrowing citizens. In the afternoon, an impressive funeral service was held in the great East Room of the White House, and amongst the two hundred mourners assembled there were the Governor-General of Canada, the Earl of Athlone, the Crown Princess Martha of Norway, and the British Foreign Secretary. The burial took place on the following day in the rose garden of the President's home.

In Washington, Eden met the new President and found no difficulty in getting on friendly terms. He reported to Winston that Roosevelt's successor was honest and friendly, conscious of his new responsibilities but not overwhelmed by them.

Truman was immediately initiated into the difficulties of the Polish question. Molotov reached Washington at this time. Short range and long range exchanges took place between the Foreign Ministers in Washington and between the heads of states in Washington, London and Moscow.

Eden was forced to anxious forebodings for the future. Contrary to the Yalta agreement the Russians were plainly intending to set up men of their own choice as the Government of Poland. Molotov insisted that pro-Soviet feeling must be fostered in Poland. Eden found that representations about Yalta were unavailing. Since the Russians were not prepared to co-operate, he even questioned whether there was a basis of unity for the establishment of the United Nations.

Leaving it to the heads of Governments to pursue the Polish controversy the Foreign Ministers and their delegations proceeded to San Francisco. Eden was accompanied by Clement Attlee, Cranborne, Halifax and their advisers. The preliminary work on the drafting of the Charter of the new organization had been begun at Dumbarton Oaks and continued at Yalta. At San Francisco the

representatives of the Allied Nations were to give final form to the framework of the new League.

Eden spoke to the conference of the new dangers with which the progress of science had confronted mankind. The world had contracted. We had entered an age when no natural barrier, whether mountain or ocean, could guarantee security against the new weapons science had evolved. "Whether one likes it or not we are now one another's neighbours. San Francisco is as close to Berlin or Tokyo as was New York to Washington a century ago. The world is one large city and our countries are its several parishes. Either we must find the way to order our relations with justice, or we shall soon head for another world war. Our work here may represent the world's last chance."

While the United Nations delegates were settling down to their task the last guns of the war were being fired in Europe. The day the Conference opened American and Russian troops linked up on the Elbe. Within a week Mussolini had been shot and Hitler had anticipated the hangman. Two and a half million Germans made their surrender to Montgomery. The unconditional surrender of the enemy on the German and Italian fronts was completed.

During the final days of fighting, while the peoples of the world were preparing to rejoice, Eden in America had been receiving communications of mounting foreboding from the Prime Minister. As the Russians had closed on Berlin, Churchill had been concerned over the fate of Denmark. Eden shared his anxieties. Russian occupation of Denmark would spread fear throughout Scandinavia. Montgomery ought to forestall them by taking Lübeck. Could not the Americans occupy Prague?

The next report to Eden was reassuring. Monty had won the race to Lübeck by the margin of a few hours and Denmark was spared the experience of a Russian deliverance.

Two days before the final capitulation, Eden received a sombre picture of Europe's prospects. The Prime Minister had drawn up the reckoning of the future. The Allied armies, under the terms previously agreed, would be required to draw back, each to its own zone of occupation. The Russians would extend their holding a hundred miles, or more, to the West. There would pass under Russian control Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria and much of Austria. Vast zones of Europe would

become Soviet-controlled, police-governed. It was a prospect for which Europe's history furnished no parallel.

As the peoples of the world continued their carefree celebrations of the fall of Nazism, Churchill's apprehensions mounted. Was the elimination of Germany to become Russia's opportunity? Europe's future was more pressing than the San Francisco Conference on which he had "never been keen". He invited Eden to consider what was going to happen when the American forces withdrew from Europe and when our own men had been demobilized. These things were more vital than amending the Charter of the United Nations.

Eden left San Francisco for Washington. He received reassuring news about American troops: there would be no immediate withdrawals from Germany. Eden took up with the Americans the question of Allied withdrawals to the agreed zones; was this to be carried out? There was some sympathy for Churchill's apprehensions and some mistrust of Britain's intentions. Ancient suspicions of Britain's imperialism were stronger, then, in the United States than any notions about Communist designs. American interest was concentrated on finishing off the Japanese, against whom Russian support was urgently required. The atom bomb had still to be perfected and the Americans had no wish to antagonize the Russians.

While these matters were in the balance, the situation was complicated by developments on the political front. With the end of the war in Europe, the break-up of the Coalition Government could not long be deferred. The Socialists wished to part company and take advantage of the tide of opinion running in their favour. Churchill sought Eden's advice. Should the Coalition continue till October, the limit set by the Socialists for their co-operation? Or should the break be made forthwith and an election held in June?

Eden weighed the pros and cons in a memorandum in which the issues were finely balanced: "I agree," he stated, "that a June election would probably be better for our party than an October one, though the Labour Party will no doubt blame us for ending the Coalition, which the nation, I believe, would like to retain for a while. But any advantage they might derive from this would be lost as the campaign developed. . . . After carefully weighing conflicting considerations I hold to the opinion I previously expressed that from the national point of view the balance of argument is in favour of an election in June."

Accordingly it was decided. The famous Coalition was dissolved. Comrades loyally associated in the partnership of war-time became the strident rivals of the hustings. Churchill formed his Caretaker Government. Eden continued at the Foreign Office. He was in no condition to play more than a negligible part in national or political affairs. A sick man when he returned to England from America, he received doctor's orders to rest for six weeks. He spent the period of the General Election in his bed, and Mrs. Eden conducted the campaign on his behalf. The one speech he made was a broadcast (June 27) a week before the poll.

Foreign affairs were Eden's main subject and he argued against the proposition that a government of the Left was necessarily more likely to establish good relations with the Russians. To choose our own government to match the political government of another country was to allow a foreign state to dictate our politics to us. "We do a lot for foreign countries—we might at least be allowed to choose our own government for ourselves." If the argument were sound, it would be reasonable for a government of the Right to be returned so that good relations might be preserved with the United States.

As to the advantages of free enterprise compared with state control, he referred to his recent trip across the Atlantic to attend the San Francisco Conference. The flight he had made across the American continent had been a revelation to him. Never before had he spanned the entire breadth of the United States. Only by such a journey was it possible to obtain an impression of the size, of the resources, of the wealth of what was the greatest industrial country in the world.

"You cannot make that journey, you cannot spend any length of time anywhere in the United States and escape the sense of vitality, confidence, freedom and frank friendship which has become the birthright of the American people, their remarkable skill. The United States has transformed itself in four years from a comparatively unarmed state, save for its navy, into the greatest military arsenal and the most formidable power on earth. As you contemplate this achievement and as you reflect that the greater part of all development in the United States has taken place in less than a hundred years, you ask yourself: how has it all been done? The answer is by enterprise, by courage, by taking risks, by

competition—certainly not by Socialism. No country believes more firmly in free enterprise than the United States."

Polling was over, and the voters' papers were still in the ballot boxes, when the Foreign Secretary emerged from the sick-room and prepared to accompany the Prime Minister to the Potsdam Conference with Stalin and Truman. Winston invited Clement Attlee to accompany them. By then, the Allied armies had made the fateful withdrawal to their previously assigned zones. The Russians advanced into the heart of Western Europe. The iron curtain, Churchill's own phrase for the sombre fact, descended.

The Potsdam Conference was the least fruitful in results of the meetings of the heads of the three States. There was much discussion of the problems of the future, but few definite decisions taken. Eden was again engaged on the interminable controversy on Poland. Plans prepared by the Foreign Secretaries were produced for the European peace treaties. Some reckoning was taken of what would have to be decided and there matters rested.

The British Ministers broke off to return home and learn the secret of the ballot boxes. Would Churchill and Eden return? The general expectation was that Winston Churchill and his government would have been accorded a small majority. Stalin, with the information from Communist sources to guide him, forecast a Churchill success by as many as eighty seats.

On July 25 the Conference was suspended. Eden and Churchill, together with Clement Attlee, flew back to London. On July 26 the election results were declared. That same day Winston Churchill surrendered the seals of office. The return flight to Potsdam was made by Clement Attlee as Prime Minister. Ernest Bevin, Eden's successor at the Foreign Office, accompanied him.

Winston Churchill's defeat at the polls in the hour of his triumph as War Leader has evoked numerous explanations. His own contribution to his downfall has been largely overlooked. The electors had voted not against him, but against his party. His personal position was never in doubt. Wherever he went his popularity was attested by the crowds cheering "Old Winnie". The voters had voted out the Tories for their failure to meet the Hitler peril and the weightiest arraignment of Tory shortcomings were the Churchill philippics of pre-war days. His speeches were remembered against the Tories, where the greater shortcomings of the

With Lady Eden after his second marriage, August 14th, 1952.
Niece of Sir Winston Churchill, Clarissa Spencer Churchill was the daughter of the late Major John Churchill

The new Prime Minister acknowledges the greeting of the crowd in Downing Street after his audience with the Queen, at which he had been appointed to succeed Sir Winston Churchill

Socialists were overlooked. Winston had dug a pit for himself. He had become the architect of his own downfall.

For the first time, Eden took his seat on the front opposition bench in the new Parliament that was opened by King George VI on August 15. On the previous day the Japanese, two of their cities devastated by the first atom bombs of war, had announced their capitulation. Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, opened a debate on Foreign Affairs and Eden made his first speech to the House of Commons as an opposition leader. It set the tone that he was to maintain throughout the Socialist administration. The parties might differ about nationalization and free enterprise, but on foreign affairs they spoke with the same voice and much the same emphasis. Bevin had given his predecessor the benefit of his support. There had been no differences between them on any crucial issue. Now Eden was to repay the debt.

"It seems to me," he said, "it is not our duty to emphasize the divergencies that may exist on foreign policy but rather to state the divergencies frankly so that we may try to reach agreement as a result of the discussions so that Parliament may in these difficult years function largely as a Council of State. The greater measure of agreement there is between us at home, the greater will be the authority of the Foreign Secretary abroad."

For Anthony Eden discharge from office had a consolation denied to his fellows of the fallen Government. The Socialist supplanters began a disturbance of the social fabric that involved most of the departments of state. At the Foreign Office Eden could mark his successor carrying on where he had left off. So complete was the continuity that it is related—"During a session of the United Nations Assembly Ernest Bevin made an important speech on British policy. An Englishwoman who had followed foreign affairs closely, and who had contrasted the bulk of the speaking minister, weighing at least 250 lb., with Eden's well-known slender frame, sat in the public gallery with an American friend. During the course of Bevin's remarks she turned to her companion and said, 'Anthony Eden is making a good speech but seems to have got a little stouter'." It is a convincing testimony adduced by the former Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, to the continuity in British foreign policy.

CHAPTER XIX

SIX YEARS' BREAK

FROM 1945 to 1951 the Conservative Party were in a minority in the House of Commons. Anthony Eden took his place for the first time on the Opposition front bench as Winston Churchill's lieutenant in leading the Conservative Opposition.

During this period it was Winston Churchill who set the lead for Britain's foreign policy. It was he who gave first and vigorous expression to the anxieties of the Free Nations confronted by the Communist imperialism and the Soviet drive towards world domination. The design to which Ernest Bevin devoted himself at the Foreign Office, based on "acceptance of Soviet hostility to the West as a major factor in world diplomacy", was the practical application of Winston's warnings in his historic Fulton speech.

In the six years he was out of office, Anthony Eden broadened the basis of his parliamentary and political experience. In the House much of the day-to-day work of leading the opposition fell to him. Churchill made his memorable contributions on the great occasions, but he was notably absent from the tedium of debate. Eden acquitted himself well in the difficult task of deputizing for an absentee leader, notoriously individual and incalculable as a political tactician.

Domestic politics made a change for Eden that he welcomed. He wanted, and his party wanted him, to build up a reputation, not as a former Foreign Secretary but as a coming Prime Minister. He spoke often in Parliament, and spoke well in debates on a wide variety of topics. The nationalization of coal and electricity, the economic situation, the shortages of food, fuel, houses and petrol, trade union law, the powers of the House of Lords, the University vote, Budgets, controls, even agriculture, education and civic restaurants—all were tackled in turn. In the country, he was the Conservative speaker most in demand for the big rally, and he made as good an impression in the theatre of a large industrial city as he did at the rural fête. His platform reputation was built up steadily.

The Conservative Party, in the first year or two after 1945, was stunned by defeat, and bewildered as to the way to set about restoring its fortunes. From Churchill no positive lead was forthcoming. On the great issues of world affairs he was magnificent: at Fulton he touched the heights, and his leadership of the movement for European Unity was inspired. But on domestic issues he seemed to have nothing to give his party except a negative and unreasoning condemnation of everything the Socialists were doing. In the party was a demand for a more positive approach, a demand that exploded at Blackpool in 1946 in something as near a revolt as a Conservative annual conference ever achieves. Eden saw the danger, and it was at that conference that he proclaimed: "A nation-wide property-owning democracy" as the Conservative goal. He set out the case for a progressive, free society, as opposed to the tenets of Socialism. That speech set the keynote for many more in the years that followed, and his hold on the party grew as evidence accumulated that his unexaggerated approach, his emphasis on the positive and constructive line, was making an impression on public opinion. The speeches were not masterpieces of original thought, and they were not couched in language that lives; but that did not matter. The resounding phrase could be left to Churchill. To live and work under the shadow of a Churchill was no easy experience. Eden had always realized that the best plan was not to seem to be trying to compete.

Freed from the ties of the Foreign Office brief, it was noted that he spoke with easy fluency, without so frequent use of the honoured cliché and with an occasional touch of mild humour as he dealt with his opponents. Thus, when one of the periodic attacks was proceeding against the House of Lords, he remarked that it reminded him of a doggerel about murderers he had heard as a child:

They slit his throat from ear to ear
His brains they battered in,
His name was any goddam peer,
They swore they'd do him in.

There is little profit in recalling the party battles of days gone by. All but the greatest parliamentary speeches are forgotten with the Hansard that records them. Eden, throughout the years of

opposition, spoke as an opponent rather lacking in the zest of the partisan, making his sane contributions to the discussion of matters of national importance. On foreign affairs he faithfully carried out his patriot's purpose of giving his support to Ernest Bevin.

In 1947 and again in 1949, collections of Eden's speeches on various occasions and subjects were issued in book form. They cannot be said to possess the timeless quality that belongs to classic orations, but few of them have been made ridiculous by the course of after events—and how many of the day-to-day pronouncements of the busily engaged statesman can pass that test?

In 1949 he escaped from the ties of Westminster to make a second tour of the Commonwealth and to re-visit many of the places he had seen on his first trip round the Empire twenty-five years before. Accompanied by his P.P.S., Allan Noble, he set out for Canada, went south to New Zealand and Australia, and returned by way of Malaya, India and Pakistan. When he landed in England again in March he had travelled 40,000 miles. The main impression of his journey he summed up in three words—"I found unity."

During his stay in New Zealand he was the guest of honour at a reception at Auckland, a city named after a distinguished forerunner in the Eden line, as he recalled in his speech: "I hope you will allow me to say that to arrive in Auckland gives me truly a sense of coming home. I am very proud of my family's connection with your beautiful and thriving city. As I have seen it to-day, Auckland is indeed the queen of the sun-kissed bays. When George Eden, Earl of Auckland, as First Lord of the Admiralty a century ago, helped Governor Hobson in his expedition to this country, he can hardly have imagined what a wonderful future he was helping to open up. He can hardly have dreamt that so fair and famous a city would one day bear his name. To re-quote to you the famous Kipling lines that are so familiar to you and to me:

> *'Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart*
> *On us, on us, the unswerving season smiles*
> *Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart*
> *To seek the Happy Isles.'* "

Australia impressed him by the vastness of the territories, their emptiness and the industrial progress that had been made since his

previous visit. The twenty-five years had been a time of consolidation. Australia had built herself into a nation with a sense of unity, confidence and solidity that had not existed a generation before. Goodwill towards Britain was probably greater than it had ever been. In India, where he stayed with the Governor-General, he had friendly talks with the Prime Minister and he also met the Prime Minister of Pakistan. In Delhi he addressed Indian members of Parliament. Through the Khyber Pass he travelled North to the Afghan frontier.

He returned with the gladdening discovery that the ties uniting the nations of the British Commonwealth were stronger than they had been a quarter of a century ago. "The kinship," he said in a broadcast account of his journeyings, "seems more natural and accepted, more a part of our lives at home and overseas. Perhaps it is that which we have endured together that now holds us so close. The year when we stood alone at war, we and the sister nations of the Commonwealth, is a time as fresh in the mind of a citizen of Wellington, or Brisbane, or Winnipeg, as it is for anyone in London."

He was fortified in health and spirit by his tour. He felt that in a world so much at odds, with so much stress and strain and bad temper, the British family had a message to give. Sometimes he was encouraged to believe that from that family spirit there might grow the sense of brotherhood, so that in time the Commonwealth might merge into wider citizenship of a united world and enjoy a lasting peace. It was the conception of a man of visions. There was little to support his conception in the rough and tumble of affairs when he returned to the Foreign Office in 1952 to take up the burden of responsibility.

CHAPTER XX

THE THIRD TERM

THE 1951 General Election that restored Winston Churchill to power by a narrow majority, brought Anthony Eden back to the Foreign Office for his third term. There had been speculation about the office he would hold. It was argued that as Prime Minister designate he should not undertake the burden of foreign affairs, but should seek freedom from the ties of running a department in one of the non-departmental posts. By so doing he would have been able to widen his political interests, give more attention to domestic affairs and generally prepare himself for the responsibilities of the Premiership.

There was general regret in the party that he proposed to resume his old place. During the early years of the ministry, pressure was put on him to induce him to change his mind and his post. The new Government made an uneasy beginning, and there were some mutterings about Churchill's conduct of affairs. There was imperfect liaison between Ministers and back-benchers. Conduct of Parliamentary business creaked distressingly. The Administration moved from one difficulty to another, with trouble over its denationalization plans, over commercial television, over teachers' pensions, old age pensions and M.P.s' pay. Dissentients urged that Eden should be transferred to give oversight to home affairs and to lead the House of Commons. He had acquitted himself well as Leader of the House during the war when called in to pull things together after the brief and unhappy experience of Sir Stafford Cripps.

The change was seriously considered, but Eden himself was not enamoured of it. He had, in 1951, been nominated as Leader of the House, but he at once decided that it would be an impossible burden to add to the Foreign Office. In resisting the idea of a transfer to a non-departmental post he was politically wise. It would have meant shouldering responsibility without full power. Absence from the domestic scene kept alive the sentiment, "If only Anthony were in charge." Meanwhile he took every opportunity of im-

pressing the stamp of his personality on the back-benchers at their private meetings. Both on foreign and defence policy, and occasionally on domestic issues too, he made speeches of considerable persuasive force at these gatherings. Outstanding was his advocacy of the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement, and the decision to withdraw from the Suez Canal base, a policy which cut right across every Conservative instinct. There were all the makings of a major revolt here, and it was primarily due to Eden's work behind the scenes that, in the event, the adverse vote was small and a party split was avoided. Eden's stock rose when it was shown that public opinion in the country was not disturbed by the line he had taken.

It was not the calculation of political advantage that determined his choice. He returned to the Foreign Office and remained there because world affairs were his special province. Here was the sphere of his life's work, here he excelled, here he could bring to bear his skill and experience. Here, in an uneasy, atom-menaced world, he could render the greatest service to the state. His preference was supported by his liking for all the attendant paraphernalia of the Foreign Secretary's place—the bustle of hops across the world, the film and television cameras, the cheery wave of the hand to the little knots of people who watch the comings and goings at the conferences, and the headlines in the world's Press. He would certainly have been less than human had he not savoured with satisfaction his own unique position at these international gatherings and his prestige as the man who was a dominant figure at the old League of Nations, and who had negotiated with the Germans before Hitler was taken seriously outside his own country. As a young man he had watched Sir Austen Chamberlain dominate the conference table. He, in his turn, had come to command an even more dominating position.

Pursuing the elusive phantoms of peace and security, he was immediately on his travels again. During his first six months in office he added another 10,000 miles to his tours.

Never in peace-time had a Foreign Secretary travelled so frequently and so far. Perhaps he was out of the country too much, but attendance at international conferences yielded important advantages. They made it much easier than it used to be to know and understand the other characters on the international stage, and to judge the climate of opinion among friends and allies.

He began his third term as Foreign Secretary on October 27, 1951. A week later he flew to Paris for the Assembly of the United Nations to face for the first time the vituperation of the Russians. The language of the Russians was so abusive that his speech before the Assembly (November 12) deplored the "bitter vehemence" of the polemics which had come to mark international gatherings. He drew a wistful contrast with the present scene and the last General Assembly he had attended, the inaugural meeting at San Francisco in 1945. Since then the nations had become divided into two confronting camps. Instead of being considered on their merits, the disarmament proposals of the Western Powers had been incontinently denounced by Vyshinsky, the leading Soviet spokesman, whose cataract of abuse had not angered but saddened him—as it must have saddened and discouraged millions.

Back home from Paris, he told his constituents that the United Nations, from being an arena where East and West could meet and talk, had become a place where they met and shouted. "I think," he added hopefully, "we have done something to improve this." The improvement was not apparent a year later. At the Assembly of 1952 he protested that Communist propaganda was surpassing itself in blackening and abusing the free peoples. Were not Her Majesty's Government and their associates frequently described as "cannibals"?

After six years' absence from office, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were concerned to make personal contact with the heads of governments abroad. First they travelled to Paris (December 17, 1951) and met their opposite numbers, M. Pleven and M. Schumann. They also visited N.A.T.O. headquarters to call on General Eisenhower. In the discussions at the Hôtel Matignon the French were given assurances that the British Government would associate themselves closely with the European Defence Community. British forces would be linked with the E.D.C. to "stand together in true comradeship".

Early in 1952, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary travelled by the *Queen Mary* across the Atlantic to resume discussions with President Truman. Their previous joint conference had been at Potsdam nearly seven years before. They opened their conversations aboard the Presidential yacht *Williamsburg* and continued them at the White House. There was a full scale conference attended by

civilian and military advisers, including the Chiefs of Staff. All outstanding problems were surveyed from Korea to the Middle East and foremost place was given to collaboration for peace. "We share the hope and determination," said the communiqué, "that war with all its modern weapons shall not again be visited on mankind. We are willing at any time to explore all reasonable means of resolving the issues that now threaten the world's peace."

After the Conference ended, Eden remained at Washington for detailed discussions on international affairs with Dean Acheson, Secretary of State. He travelled to New York to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Columbia University (January 11). Wearing gown and mortar-board, he delivered the Gabriel Silver Lecture. His speech, the first major pronouncement he had made since resuming office, was a declaration of his aims, and an affirmation of his hopes. He brought the lessons of the past to bear upon the problems of the future.

In twenty-five years he had been concerned in the search for peace. After the First World War they had sought to establish peace through the League of Nations. He remained a believer in the principles of the League. "We must," he declared, "dare once more and do better. The human crisis to-day is not primarily a material one. It is a crisis of the mind and spirit. Our mastery over nature and our control of physical power have so far outstripped our self-control that we have become very dangerous animals. Some may fear that events are sweeping mankind towards unknown and catastrophic ends. They doubt their ability to control or direct their destiny.

"This sense of political fatalism is a symptom of the power from which the world is suffering. It opens the door to the forces that prey on the moral weakness of men and reduce the individual to servitude. Traditional beliefs, long held loyalties, and the ties of race, history and interest—these are natural forces that bind men together. But in the modern world many of them have been loosened by the upheavals of war and the strains of economic changes. Some of them have been discarded altogether, and in their place are new voices, new ventures, new ideas. It is a formidable task to blend these voices together in some sensible harmony. Yet that is what we have to do. For the enemy stands at the gate ready to take advantage of our discords, playing upon the lonely and isolated minds of men and attempting by every means to herd them

together in droves where independent thought can have no play. If we can understand the nature of the crisis we have to face we shall be less afraid of it and able to deal with it. The contest is between the generous faith of western civilization and the bitter doctrine of Communist Imperialism."

Communism, once it seized upon a country, destroyed the mind of the people and turned them into "truckloads of unanimous and anonymous robots". The Communist assault on free and democratic thought was more formidable than its Fascist counterpart had been.

Eden found cause for the conviction that the risks of world war were not greater than they had been a year or two previously. "In fact, I believe the reverse. I believe that the Russian Communist empire shares with other states and nations the desire for survival. I do not believe that the Soviet leaders are eager to face the utter chaos and destruction which would result from a full-scale conflict with the West. They are on the whole careful and calculating in the risks they take. It is part of their dogma that the home of the revolution must not be needlessly endangered. . . . We have grounds to expect that so long as our own position is clear, and so long as we are plainly capable of punishing aggression, there will be no major war."

Back at his desk in Whitehall, the Foreign Secretary formulated his plans for solving the outstanding problems. On disarmament he proposed that all armed forces and all weapons of all nations should be "disclosed and verified" category by category, starting with armaments of the simpler sort and ending with the more important and secret kinds. First the nations should put their cards on the table, revealing what weapons they had. Then agreement should be sought on "certain definite criteria for the limitation of armaments". Against this scheme the Russians brought forward a blanket proposal. Every nation, they argued, should scrap atomic bombs and automatic weapons. Then all other weapons should be reduced by an equal percentage all round. To this Eden stated the obvious objection. "If the Soviet proposals were accepted as they stand," he said in the House of Commons, "there would be an overwhelming superiority with the Power which to-day possesses the greatest strength of conventional weapons. And everybody knows which that Power is."

Other projects and problems were less difficult of solution. One was Persia. With no adequate market for the oil products of the factories they had confiscated from Britain, the Persian Government were beginning to put out feelers. Another problem was Egypt, where a tacit policy of mob murder and guerilla warfare was maintained against the British.

A third problem, and the gravest, was the fighting in Korea. Armistice negotiations at Panmunjon were still taking their protracted course. Eden pressed for an agreement on the liberation of prisoners-of-war. The Soviets and the Chinese argued that when the fighting ended all North Korean soldiers imprisoned in South Korean camps should be shipped back to North Korea. It was notorious that vast numbers of North Korean prisoners had been unwilling conscripts, who feared their fate under the North Korean totalitarian régime. "A cease-fire in Korea," said Eden, "would hardly be worth while if we are to sacrifice principles sacred to all fair-minded men. How should we look if we paid with the spectacle of 100,000 men driven into Communist hands by the bayonets of the United Nations, with thousands committing suicide on the way? It is unthinkable!"

It has been Eden's method, when solution of a major problem has not been forthcoming, to try to break it down into minor ones and reach a settlement by instalments. It was in this fashion that he tackled the Korean deadlock. Since the Communists would not agree to a wholesale exchange of prisoners, why should they not agree to an interim exchange of the sick and wounded? This suggestion, conceived and canvassed by the Foreign Secretary, was endorsed by the American, Commonwealth and other governments and was officially placed before the Communist spokesmen at Panmunjon by General Clark, U.N. Commander. Some weeks later (March 1953) acceptance of the suggestion was broadcast by Peking. The interchange of sick and wounded men which followed broke the deadlock and led to the armistice agreement of July 1953, which repudiated forcible repatriation and vindicated the views Eden expressed in his Guildhall speech.

The organization of Europe's defence and the associated problem of the position of Germany were the subject of continuing discussions. The plan was that six contracting Powers—Western Germany and five of her former enemies, France, Italy, Belgium,

Holland and Luxembourg—should contribute regular units to an exclusively defensive army, wearing the same uniform, and sharing the same budget. The ultimate strength of E.D.C. was put at forty-three divisions of 13,000 combat troops each. They were to be a "supra-national" force, under the supreme command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Britain's support was pledged to the E.D.C., but when it was suggested that we should join a European Federation Eden firmly declined. We knew in our bones, he said, that Britain's story and her interests lay far beyond the continent of Europe. "Our thoughts roam across the seas to the many communities in which our people play their part in every corner of the world. This is our life. Without it we should be no more than some millions of people living on an island off the coast of Europe. But does this mean we are turning our backs on Europe? Certainly not. . . . We have the largest armoured force on the continent of Europe of any of the Atlantic Powers. And we have undertaken to keep it there, as well as our other forces, as long as they are required in the interests of North Atlantic defence. Is that abandoning Europe?"

Far from being reduced, Britain's commitments on the European mainland grew. In mid-April 1952 came the first announcements of the guarantee of British military aid to the six Powers of E.D.C. should any one of them be attacked. Among the six to whom protection was thus provided was Western Germany, still an enemy nation technically, but soon to be re-admitted to the European fold. This was largely the result of Eden's tireless comings and goings between Dr. Adenauer, the West German Chancellor, and M. Schumann, the French Foreign Minister, who was saddled with the difficult job of persuading his fellow Frenchmen that Germans could be trusted with guns in their hands.

On May 26, 1952, Western Germany came into her own, when Britain (represented by the Foreign Secretary), America and France signed agreements that gave Western Germany almost complete independence and included her on a basis of equality in the European Defence Community. "We sincerely hope," said Eden, "that this will mean the end of Franco-German conflicts which have deeply shadowed the peace of Europe in the last hundred years."

In Berlin's Tiergarten, where he planted three German larch trees and three camellia bushes—the latter a gift from Queen

Elizabeth—he was cheered by thousands of onlookers. Berlin he talked of as "the front line in a war of nerves" waged by a Power which preferred intrigue and disruption to the way of friendly co-operation.

During the parliamentary recess that August, Anthony Eden was joined by family ties with Sir Winston by marriage to his niece Clarissa Churchill. A generation ago, divorce, even for the innocent party, could mean the finish of a political career. Since then, more enlightened opinion has declined to permit the country to be deprived of a man's services on this account.

The occasion was not allowed to pass without protests. The "Church Times" devoted an editorial to a homily on the re-marriage of divorced persons. "Mr. Eden's private life," it said, "is as much his own affair as any other man's. But high public position is bound to lend a special significance to private occasions. A generation ago the Foreign Secretary (who is more than likely one day to be the Prime Minister) would have felt compelled to choose between his public career and such a marriage. It is, after all, only sixteen years since the reigning monarch was forced to make an unhappy choice of a similar character between his marriage and his throne. Mr. Eden's action this week shows how far the climate of public opinion in this matter has changed for the worse."

Comment and correspondence followed in the daily Press. A preponderance of letter-writers favoured re-marriage after divorce.

Within a few days of his divorce, in 1950, Eden had attended a meeting of 6,000 Conservative women at the Albert Hall. They gave him a cordial reception. They cheered to the echo when Winston spoke of him as the man to whom he would in due course hand over the torch. Acceptance of the second marriage was made the easier by the fact that his bride was the niece of Sir Winston and Lady Churchill.

Clarissa Spencer Churchill, now Lady Eden, is the daughter of the late Major John Spencer Churchill and of Lady Gwendoline Bertie, daughter of the seventh Earl of Abingdon. The daughter of the Prime Minister's younger brother, who had died in 1947, Miss Churchill was thirty-two, twenty-three years younger than her fiancé.

One of the more notable of the 1938 débutantes, she had studied

philosophy at Oxford, written propaganda during the war for the Ministry of Information, helped to produce "Britansky Soynznik", an English language newspaper edited in London and published by the Russians from Kuibischev, and had worked for a spell at the Foreign Office as a decoding clerk. Since the war, she had been engaged as specialist for a woman's magazine, as a publicity worker for Korda films, and on the staff of a London publishing house.

The wedding took place on August 14 at Caxton Hall Register Office, Westminster. It was a sunny day, and a confetti-throwing crowd gathered in the street. The bridegroom wore a dark blue suit and a white carnation. The bride wore swirling pink. Sir Winston and Lady Churchill were present. A family luncheon party followed at 10 Downing Street.

That autumn the Foreign Secretary was engaged on his travels in Europe, working on what he termed his "mosaic" for peace. In Strasbourg he reminded the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe that failure to harmonize their viewpoints would lead to the dangerous prospect of European disunity. In Vienna he assured Dr. Figl, the Austrian Chancellor, that Britain would do everything in her power to overcome Soviet obstructionism and achieve a peace treaty that would restore Austria to full independence. In Rome he talked with de Gaspari, Italian Prime Minister, about Trieste and the disputed demarcation line between Italian and Yugoslavian authority. In Belgrade he compared notes on the Trieste problem and broached many other issues in long talks with the Yugoslav President, Marshal Tito, and his advisers. He remained in Yugoslavia for six days, cordially fêted by Tito, who greeted him in a magnificent white uniform with gold and crimson facings. When they parted at the Villa Bled, he received from the Marshal a massive carved box, containing thousands of cigarettes, and handed to his host, among other presents, a length of Lovat Cheviot tweed.

Tito, thorough-going Communist and head of a totalitarian state, had broken with Stalin four years earlier. When criticism was made of his visit to Tito, Eden said: "So long as I am in the Foreign Office I am ready to work with any country which will contribute to the collective effort for peace. That does not mean that I agree, or you agree with the internal political system of these countries. But it is not by ostracizing them or holding them aloof

that you can best bring them to understand your way of thinking and your way of life."

The following spring, Marshal Tito, on the personal invitation of the Prime Minister, sailed up the Thames. He was a popular visitor.

In February 1953, the Foreign Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer (R. A. Butler) left Southampton in the *Queen Elizabeth*. Their purpose was to talk to American representatives about ideas upon which the recent Commonwealth Economic Conference had agreed—"The future of world trade, wider world trade (we hope) and economic well-being in general." According to the political correspondents, Eden's head, no less than Butler's, was full of such topics as International Monetary Fund reform, currency stabilizers, commodity-price regulation, tariff and credit policies. A London expert, quoted by the "New York Times", said the financial plan which the two statesmen were taking with them was so complicated that "Mr. Eden understands ten per cent of it, Mr. Butler about forty per cent, and their advisers about ninety per cent." Anglophobes across the Atlantic spoke, quite unjustly, of a beggars' mission. Irish-American pickets waited on the New York waterfront bearing placards, "The U.S. Treasury is not the Garden of Eden."

As the *Queen Elizabeth* sailed slowly up the Hudson River on March 4, the news came of Stalin's critical illness. Reporters climbed aboard and sought Eden's views. "I am sorry to hear the news," he said. "If Mr. Stalin dies," he was asked, "what will be the effect on international affairs?" "That," he returned, "is a good question for you to ask, not a wise question for me to answer."

Under the time-table that had been drawn up, Eden was not to have met the President until later in the week. He flew at once to Washington and took part in a hastily convoked meeting at the White House the same night, at which he exchanged views on Russia's future with the new President, General Eisenhower, and John Foster Dulles, the new Secretary of State.

After Stalin's death would the Soviets be inclined to show less animus against the West? That was the question in all minds. At a Washington Press luncheon, the following day, Eden touched upon it not unhopefully. "The Western Powers," he said, "must be ready to negotiate with Russia to end the division of the world

into two armed camps. . . . I have never been one of those people willing to forecast what will happen behind the Iron Curtain. I think there is only one attitude to take—to build our strength and adapt ourselves to things which might happen and over which we have no control behind the Iron Curtain."

At the end of these Washington talks, a joint communiqué was issued stating that the Ministers had exchanged views on "developments in the Soviet Union". To this bald statement were appended five other points on which agreement had been reached—the need for ratifying and speeding-up E.D.C.; the line to be pursued for settlement of the Persian oil dispute; the urgency "for the sake of everyone concerned" of a constructive solution of Middle Eastern problems; strengthening of controls in U.K. and our colonial ports to prevent shipment of strategic materials to the mainland of China; and confirmation of the principle that the use of U.S. bases in Britain in an emergency "would be a matter for joint decision by Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time".

There was no word in the communiqué about the economic aims which were originally said to be the sole theme of the Eden-Butler mission. The Foreign Secretary had decided to leave economics to the Chancellor. When he rose in the House of Commons on March 17, the members saw a preoccupied man. His speech, inevitably unforthcoming about matters still in negotiation with America, irritated a section of the Opposition. There were repeated shouts of "Cliché, cliché!" and bursts of ironical laughter at the more evasive phrases. When he told Members he would not "inflict" upon them a detailed account of his talks, sardonic amusement reached its peak.

As he sat down a member on the opposite benches emitted a loud, artificial yawn. A little later Eden jumped up reprovingly and, emphasizing his words with repeated bangs on the despatch box, said that he and the Chancellor had met great friendship and understanding in America—"and I would only ask the House to meet us in the same spirit". It was later explained that his speech had been unimaginatively drafted and that, had he had time to revise it, he would have made a more impressive performance.

The Foreign Secretary was a sick man. At first his indisposition was not taken seriously. On March 30 it was announced that he was

confined to his house with a gastric chill and had been obliged to cancel his engagements. It was added that he was expected back at the Foreign Office on April 2. In fact he did not return until October 5. In the intervening six months he had submitted himself to three major operations.

The first and second operations, on April 9 and April 29, were for chronic inflammation of the gall-bladder, and for the removal of fluid which was causing jaundice. Both were carried out at the London Clinic. On May 19 his five medical advisers, including the surgeon who had twice operated upon him, issued a bulletin stating that the main bile duct had not yet healed and that a further operation was imperative. "On our advice," they added, "Mr. Eden has agreed to travel to Boston in the United States in order that Dr. Richard Cattell, who saw him recently in London, may perform the operation."

Dr. Cattell of Boston, using the equipment and professional assistance of the Lahey Clinic, had developed the modern technique of bile duct operations. For Eden's flight to Boston (June 5), President Eisenhower offered the loan of his private 'plane. It was decided, instead, to use the Canadair 5, the only aircraft of its type in the world, in which the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh had travelled during their Canadian tour. Dr. Cattell successfully operated, removing an obstruction of the main bile duct.

While still confined to his bed in Boston, the patient received hundreds of well-wishing letters from Americans whom he had never met. At home there were tributes in the Commons from political friends and opponents. Speaking in Glasgow Sir Winston said: "Mr. Eden has been having a pretty bad time. He is a great Foreign Secretary, a man whose whole career shows that, although resolute to fight in time of war, he understands fully all the diplomatic and international facts and circumstances upon which the maintenance of peace may be founded."

At length, accompanied by his wife, Eden was able to leave hospital. His convalescence began with three months lounging and bathing at a friend's house on Rhode Island, and then on the Mediterranean coast. When he returned to Westminster he was still a shadow of the man he had been, but he quickly gained in strength.

CHAPTER XXI

KNIGHT OF THE GARTER

HEARTENED by restoration to health, the Foreign Secretary resumed his place at Westminster to achieve a round of diplomatic successes. He found the means to settle the oil dispute with Persia. He reached an agreement with Egypt over the base in the Suez Canal Zone, gaining the acceptance of the Right wing Conservatives. He took the leading part at Geneva in the discussions that resulted in a cease-fire in Indo-China. Finally, when the European Defence Scheme had collapsed, he negotiated a Nine-Power Pact on which to base Europe's defence. Not all the agreements provided, as fully as he could have wished, for the final settlement of the problems involved, but they had the supreme merit that they worked. It was a gratifying record of achievement and it testified to his physical fitness for the responsibilities of the succession.

Two days after relieving Salisbury, his locum tenens at the Foreign Office, Eden had a clamorously affectionate greeting at the annual conference of the Conservative Party at Margate in October. Photographers stood on tables or stormed the platform, newsreel and television cameras turned, delegates clapped and cheered. Sir Winston Churchill spoke of the "gruelling six months of pain and danger" he had suffered, but added that now he was recovered "and able to bring his unrivalled experience and knowledge to bear upon the problem which haunts all our minds, namely, to find a secure foundation for lasting peace".

The settlement with Persia was announced on August 5 when Mossadiq, the Britain-hater, was in gaol and the Shah was recently returned from brief exile. The Persian Government agreed to pay the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which had been dispossessed, £25,000,000 as compensation. The country's oil industry was to remain nationalized; but Anglo-Iranian was to have a 40 per cent interest and American, Dutch and French companies the remainder in a holding company, registered in Britain, which would have

practical charge of producing and refining. British interests could be satisfied with the arrangements and, as Eden told the Persian Prime Minister, his country stood to derive great benefits. "We have now," he said, "an opportunity of restoring relations between our two countries to their traditional friendship." Thus ended a quarrel that had lasted for three years.

The way for agreement with Egypt on the Suez base had been prepared before Eden's illness by a complementary pact on the Sudan. Since 1899 the Sudan had been a Condominium, administered by a governor-general on the joint behalf of Great Britain and Egypt. Shortly before the Conservatives took office in 1951, the Egyptian Government had torn the 1899 agreement to pieces, demanding British assent to the merging of the Sudan with Egypt and the acknowledgment of the King of Egypt as the King of the Sudan.

Like his Socialist predecessors, Eden declined to agree. By the autumn of 1952, he had induced General Neguib's administration to agree to Sudanese self-government. By a pact announced in the House on February 12, 1953, arrangements were made for early elections in the Sudan, and the setting-up of a Sudanese Parliament, under Anglo-Egyptian surveillance, as a first step towards the election of a Constituent Assembly. There were critics who scoffed at the notion of illiterate tribesmen going to the polling booth in the Sudanese wilds. Elections, they argued, would be easily rigged and Sudanese independence become more precarious in the end than in the beginning. Eden's view was that the right conceded to the Sudanese to "order their own development" constituted a reasonable settlement of a question which had long "bedevilled" our relations with Egypt.

In Egypt itself, riot, arson and assault continued to menace English lives and property. Negotiations between the British Ambassador, Sir Ralph Stevenson, and Colonel Nasser, Egypt's new leader, dragged on. In guarding the Suez Canal, 70,000 British troops "were locked up". On the Right wing of the Conservative Party the rumour ran that Eden intended to evacuate this force and "do a scuttle". In the House, forty or so Conservative dissidents, known as the Suez rebels, led by Captain Charles Waterhouse, demanded that the Cairo negotiations be ended. Eden with polite regret declined. The outline agreement, initialled by the two sides

in Cairo on July 28, 1954, and signed in its final form three months later, confirmed the fears of the dissentients.

The British Government undertook to withdraw all British forces from Egypt in a period of twenty months and to transfer responsibility for the security and maintenance of the installations of the base to the Egyptian Government. Colonel Nasser agreed that, as the British forces withdrew, a smaller, civilian-run base should be established which, during the seven-year period of the agreement, should be available for "automatic re-activization" by the United Kingdom in the event of an external attack on Egypt, Turkey or any Arab League State.

In the Commons debate that followed, Waterhouse made his protest at what had been done. "I and my friends feared there would be a sell-out," he said. "This is not a sell-out. It is a give-away. . . . We have handed over £500,000,000 worth of stores, plant and buildings to the Egyptians, and if they like to use them against Palestine or anybody else, who is going to say, 'No, you will not?' "

Protest made, the agreement was accepted after a meeting at which the Prime Minister, as well as the Foreign Secretary, explained the need for new military deployments to correspond with new strategic facts.

The ending of civil war in Indo-China was an outstanding personal achievement. For seven years France and Vietnam loyalists had been combating Vietminh, the Communist rebel movement which, with Chinese and Russian backing, had developed into formidable military force. After a gallant resistance, the French strong-point at Dien Bien Phu was on the point of falling: the rebels were already preparing to invest Hanoi, capital of the Vietnam province. A conference of all the nations involved, directly or indirectly, was summoned at Geneva.

On his way to the conference, Eden halted in Paris, to consult with Bidault, then Foreign Minister, and Dulles, American Secretary of State. It seemed that all-out military aid must be given to the French. Instead of proceeding to Geneva, Eden flew home for consultations. Late that Saturday night (April 24, 1954) he motored from the London Airport to Chequers to consult with Sir Winston. In the morning they travelled to No. Ten and conferred with as many Cabinet Ministers as could be contacted and with the three Service Chiefs.

With the air charged with disastrous possibilities, Eden resumed his journey to Geneva. There he played the part of intermediary between Molotov and Chou En-lai, the Soviet and Chinese leaders, with their Vietminh allies, and Bidault, Dulles and the Vietnam spokesmen. The situation was made the more delicate and difficult by the fact that the United States and Communist China were not on diplomatic terms. As Dulles and Bedell Smith did not officially recognize Chou En-lai's presence, Eden had to serve as a "hyphen" between them.

He addressed himself to the practicalities of a cease-fire, urging the two sides to agree on areas of concentration for their troops. He reasoned that once military concentration areas were agreed to, political demarcation lines would be the easier to settle.

The negotiations, begun at Geneva in April, dragged on during the summer. By mid-May Eden was doubting Communist good faith. In early June he was beginning to talk of possible failure. The divergences between the two sides were wide and deep. "I say this," he confessed, "with infinite regret, but it is our stern duty to face realities."

French opinion was divided and pessimistic. Laniel's government fell. Pierre Mendès-France succeeded, and with him came a resurgence of hope. The new French leader pledged himself, in conjunction with France's allies, to bring the Indo-China war to an end within a month. For the undertaking to be kept, the armistice should have begun by midnight on July 20. The final documents were not signed until the small hours of the 21st, but none was disposed to twit "Mr. France" on this account. A conflict which had cost France and her associates 92,000 dead, 114,000 wounded and 28,000 prisoners was at last ended. For the first time since 1939 no war—the cold war always excepted—was proceeding anywhere in the world. The doors of the temple of Janus might at last be closed.

There were acclamations for the Foreign Secretary for his share in the settlement. From Sir Winston Churchill he received the telegram: "I send you my sincere congratulations and those of your colleagues on the success which has at length attended your patient and persevering skill at Geneva." In the House of Lords one of his old Socialist opponents, Lord Jowitt, spoke in praise of the manner in which Eden had stuck to his task. Lord Samuel, for the

Liberal peers, said the Foreign Secretary had been spokesman not only for the United Kingdom but for the Commonwealth and the entire United Nations, a circumstance which made them feel proud and grateful.

There were dissentient protests from critics who complained that under the cease-fire terms the Communists were confirmed in their sway over one-half of the Vietnam, and were well placed to swallow the other half by infiltration. In the Commons, a Tory back-bencher sarcastically asked how far Geneva was distanced from Munich. The parallel had already been suggested by a widely-discussed "Punch" cartoon that showed Eden wearing Neville Chamberlain's swallow-tail coat and carrying the legendary umbrella. American uneasiness and hostility were expressed by a writer in "Time" magazine:

> The outside world has a mistaken image of Eden. It tends to think of him as a courageous anti-appeaser of the Munich days, who resigned rather than go along with Chamberlain's policy. But the truth is that he resigned only under pressure from his Under-Secretary, the present Lord Salisbury. Eden obviously relishes his role in Geneva and delights in recapturing the glamour of his League of Nations days. His friends picture him as the only real diplomat on the Western side. Is he not the only one who can lunch with the U.S.'s Bedell Smith [Under-Secretary of State] or France's Bidault, yet take tea with Chou En-lai and dine with Molotov? The British newspapers are running over with enthusiasm for his exploits without stopping to consider whether anything is gained by drinking tea with the Chinese.

In one of his speeches in the House on the progress of the Geneva talks (June 23), Eden went out of his way to speak of Molotov's helpfulness in matters of procedure and the improvement in Anglo-Chinese relations which had resulted from his contacts with Chou En-lai. All this, he submitted, amounted to "a real contribution to peaceful co-existence". He referred with thinly disguised impatience to the difficulties that arose at Geneva from the absence of normal diplomatic relations between the United States and Communist China. Somebody, he said, had to undertake the job of providing those countries with a channel of communication, otherwise "we should very soon have been completely unstuck". Accordingly he decided to become the channel himself—"at the risk of being called a Munichеer".

He had no more than begun a well-earned holiday in Austria before a new and acute crisis developed. The French Assembly, harried by old enmities and alarms, were bent on rejecting the E.D.C. treaty. Instead of permitting the Germans to re-arm, they would keep them at arm's length. Cutting short his holiday, Eden flew back to London. In the dining-room at Chartwell he conferred on Germany's future with Sir Winston and Mendès-France, who had flown over at short notice to enlist British aid. Means were discussed for relieving French anxieties over the re-arming of a sovereign and independent Western Germany, subject to certain safeguards, as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The co-operation of other European states was necessary. In September Eden set out on a five-day Continental tour. The Saturday he spent in Brussels, talking with the Foreign Ministers of Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. On the Sunday he was with Adenauer in Bonn. Monday and Tuesday he spent in Rome. On the Wednesday he and Mendès-France were closeted in Paris with their advisers.

The result of these hurried consultations was the London Nine-Power Conference and the Paris agreements in which the findings of the conference were embodied. The Powers, whose statesmen gathered at Lancaster House in September 1954, were the six E.D.C. countries—France, Western Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg—and three others who had substantial forces in Western Germany—Britain, Canada and the United States. At the conference session of September 29, 1954, Eden electrified his fellow-delegates by offering a pledge on behalf of Britain. If the conference were successful and Western Germany became a member of the North Atlantic Community, then—

> *The United Kingdom will continue to maintain on the mainland of Europe, including Germany, the effective strength of the United Kingdom forces which are now assigned to Saceur (the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe)—that is, four Divisions and the Tactical Air Force—or whatever Saceur regards as equivalent fighting capacity. The United Kingdom undertakes not to withdraw these forces against the wishes of the majority of the Brussels Treaty Powers, who should take their decision in the knowledge of Saceur's view.*

Only two qualifications were made. One was that the promise would not necessarily be binding in the event of "an acute overseas emergency". The second, that if the maintenance of British forces on the European mainland imposed too great a strain on British finances, the North Atlantic Council would be invited to review the financial conditions on which the formations were maintained. The effect of the pledge Eden had announced was that the United Kingdom would maintain some 100,000 armed men, or an equivalent strength, in Western Europe practically for the rest of the century. It was a commitment that had never been entertained in the years between the wars. British isolation was ended. We had accepted responsibilities as a member of the concert of Europe.

On October 4, 1954, the nine ministers set their names to the Final Act of the London Conference. This laid it down that, subject to ratification by their respective parliaments, Western Germany should be brought into N.A.T.O. as a full and equal member. Western Germany would be authorized to call up at least 500,000 men to form an army of twelve divisions and to revive her arms industry, building tanks, heavy guns and limited types of submarines, fighter 'planes and bombers. For her part, Western Germany undertook not to manufacture anywhere within her frontiers atomic, chemical or biological weapons or long-range missiles.

"If," argued Mr. Eden two days later at the Conservative Party's annual conference (October 6, 1954), "we were to continue to discriminate against Germany and to treat her as an inferior, we would ourselves destroy those very impulses among the Germans which offer us the greatest hope for the future. You may have your suspicions of what Germany may do. But if you ostracize Germany you make those suspicions into certainties. If you turn your back upon her you will certainly drive Germany once more along dark and dangerous paths."

There was a body of opinion on the Left which dissented from this view. Yet the principle of German rearmament was endorsed that autumn both by the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, although with small majorities. The House of Commons approved the agreements (November 18, 1954) by 264 votes to 4.

As main architect of the new European order of security the Foreign Secretary was congratulated upon his personal triumph

by Dulles, Mendès-France and Adenauer. The United States Secretary of State backed the British decision to maintain an army in Europe as "historically momentous". President Eisenhower greeted the results of the conference as one of the greatest diplomatic achievements of our time.

As recognition of his services the honour of a Garter Knighthood was conferred on the Foreign Secretary. On October 20 he was received in audience by Queen Elizabeth who knighted him and invested him with the insignia of the Order.

A milestone had been passed in Europe's history, but no milestone marks the end of the road that is travelled by those who labour for world peace. Each achievement is no more than the spur to new endeavours. After the advance in Europe came the problems of Asia and Formosa. The intentions of the Soviet Union remained baffling and menacing. Under Malenkov's brief ascendancy hopes had been nourished that a more conciliatory policy had followed Stalin's passing. Sir Anthony was not able to encourage this sense of optimism. Ministers of fourteen N.A.T.O. nations met in Paris in December 1954 and surveyed Soviet trends. They found, as Sir Anthony said, "no reason to consider that the Soviet threat to the free world had diminished. The massive military power of the Soviet Union is growing rapidly. Soviet policy is still aimed at confusing, dividing and weakening the West."

The year 1955 was not far advanced before preparations were concluded for the change in the Premiership. On the day following the dinner party at which he entertained his Sovereign at 10 Downing Street, Sir Winston Churchill surrendered the seals of office. On April 6, Queen Elizabeth invited Sir Anthony Eden to form a new Government.

CHAPTER XXII

AT WORK—AND HOME

WORK, hard, unremitting work, is the lot of the Foreign Secretary. Within a few hours of taking office, he finds that he has been appointed to a term of hard labour.

There are Ministers who are driven less hard. You can imagine that the Privy Seal may take time off for a chat with the Lord President, or that Agriculture may pause in his indefatigable labours to share a cup of tea with industrious Education. At the Foreign Office the pressure of the papers requires ceaseless and tireless attention.

Eden brought the habit of industry to his duties. His day began early and finished late. Even before he had set out for his department his first telephone call of the morning gave directions for his immediate requirements. At night, after he had returned to his slippers and his fireside, the despatch box was brought in with the last delivery of documents.

Unlike the Prime Minister just across the way, the Foreign Secretary does not sleep in. A grateful nation houses the Minister in a flat in Carlton Gardens. On fine mornings, if time did not press, Sir Anthony was to be seen walking over to his office which he entered by the side door from the Horse Guards. Often he was accompanied by his Golden Labrador, who first made her entry at the Foreign Office in 1951. Officials were quickly on terms with Bess who, if no one came across from Carlton Gardens to walk her back, was accustomed to spend her morning curled before the fire.

The Foreign Office is handy for calling on the Prime Minister just across Downing Street, but is not otherwise conspicuous for its convenience. We have not been fortunate in our Whitehall architecture and the buildings around the Foreign Office quadrangle are things neither of beauty nor of comfort. Sir Gilbert Scott would have carried out the work in modern Gothic but for Palmerston's objections. Instead there is a façade of little distinction, and behind it a labyrinth of corridors, stairways and draughts.

The Foreign Secretary's room is reached by way of the main

staircase that fails to achieve the impressiveness of the stairways in some of London's mansion homes. The approach to the room of state at the north-west corner is by way of a corridor, its walls decorated with murals. Britannia appears as a matron in various disguises, attended by her children of Empire and Commonwealth, clustered at her knees or buckling on the sword in her defence. Outside the door to the ministerial apartment Silence kneels, dark and in blue tulle, her finger to her lips.

What impressions were Anthony Eden's when first he passed as Minister into the inner shrine of diplomacy? Did he walk across to the windows which are the dominating feature as the door is opened? Did he reflect that it was before these Edward Grey stood in 1914 as he mourned the lights going out in Europe?

It is scarcely possible that on his first entry Eden can have stopped short before gazing from the windows with their incomparable London vistas—to the West across St. James' Park, to the North across the Horse Guards to the Admiralty Building and the Duke of York high above the Steps. Glancing at the room, his first impression would have been of space and loftiness, a place for great thoughts and high endeavours. Artistically he may have considered the proportions not quite correct, height a shade too great for length for a fastidious taste. The abundance of gilt on view on wall and ceiling could not have escaped his eye. "Ornate" was Simon's verdict, which has otherwise been rendered garish.

In his chair, seated at the desk, did Eden, like Simon before him, remember Curzon's inquiry for the missing ink-pot? "In Lord Salisbury's time there stood here an ink-stand of alabaster—what is this contraption of glass and brass?" The days of alabaster have not returned.

At the Minister's back is the cavity in which fires no longer burn, to the great advantage of the Minister's health. In front of him are the West windows; to his left, separated by a wide track, are the glass-fronted bookcases; to his right, across a wider space, a conference table, and the windows overlooking the Horse Guards.

Before this desk Eden was accustomed to take his seat at ten o'clock in the morning. For some hours he was seated, head down, immersed in papers reaching the red-topped desk in steady stream —memoranda on blue paper, headed with the Foreign Office crest, telegrams and reports from embassies and legations abroad.

Eden reads with deceptive ease and speed. The colleague or official who thinks that the speed is too great for the contents to be assimilated receives quick proof to the contrary. Eden's own letters and memoranda are dictated to a secretary. Only in cases of difficulty, where there is need for extreme precision in the use of words, can he spare the time to write down what he wishes to communicate. The papers submitted to him bear his markings in red, a shade in ink by office tradition reserved exclusively for the Minister. His Socialist predecessors, Bevin and Morrison, preferred to express themselves in blue, but Eden reverted to old-time marking.

It is not by means of memoranda and written phrases neatly turned that Eden chooses to transact affairs. His preference is for the personal approach. Where Salisbury and Grey plied their pens, Eden sought to establish direct contact between man and man. For him the swift exchange of talk across the table took the place of the leisured and laborious circulation of memoranda. He excels in the transaction of business in Committee.

Within his office his methods are consultative and democratic. He demands the amplest guidance that the department can provide and he seeks it from a wide range of his officials.

Some Foreign Ministers would be content with consulting the adviser-in-chief, now Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Permanent Under-Secretary. This was not Eden's method. When a major problem arose his course was to call a conference, to which were summoned any members of the staff sufficiently informed about the matter involved. There was nothing formal in the proceedings. All were invited to join in the discussion over which the Minister presided as question-master. Thus he gained the advantage of the opinions of a variety of minds, and the staff benefited in experience and broadened outlook.

By the time of his third term at the Foreign Office, Eden's long and wide contact with affairs had made him a Minister of unparalleled experience. For a quarter of a century he had been engaged in the tasks of diplomacy. He was the senior of the majority of his professional advisers. Few could surpass him in the wide range of his knowledge. Aided by an admirable memory he could find his way unaided through documents and precedents.

For his staff it was at times disconcerting. They might search in

vain for a memorandum or instruction of twenty years before, to discover that, though the files might not be revealing, the Minister's memory was clear. He remembered because it was something that he himself had drawn up. Younger men found that it was unwise to challenge the accuracy of the Minister's memory.

His knowledge of affairs has been extended by his many visits abroad. He is one of the most travelled men of the age. Sir Winston Churchill had more miles to his credit by far than any Prime Minister, but he was out-travelled by his Foreign Minister. Sir Anthony has stood in most of the capitals of Europe. He has ranged from Murmansk to Athens, through the Near East and North Africa. He has flown East to Bangkok. New York is nearly as familiar to him as Paris, and in Paris he feels nearly as much at home as in London.

Alone amongst Foreign Secretaries he had journeyed as extensively in the British Empire and Dominions as in foreign parts. Twice he has visited Australia, first as a young man at the outset of his career, and again in 1949 in the course of a round-the-Dominions trip, that took him from New Zealand to the Khyber Pass and added 40,000 miles to the sum of his globe-trotting.

To the knowledge he has obtained of the world at first hand he has added the advantage of the use of languages. As a youth, under his governess, he obtained an early command of French and German. So good is his French that as Minister he dispensed with a French interpreter. French novels have been the diversion of his leisure hours and he speaks on Proust as an authority. In diplomatic negotiations he has used French with all who can express themselves in that tongue. His German remains adequate, but he uses it with far less fluency. In the Middle East he is at home where Arabic is spoken, and he was able to converse with the Shah of Persia and Queen Suraya in their own language.

Men whose memories go far back in Foreign Office history contrast the Eden easiness of manner with the autocrats of the past. But the smile does not altogether conceal the Minister's firmness, though it may smooth the way to the accomplishment of his purpose. Eden has a tenacity where his principles are involved, and he has moral courage. He can say "no" not merely to an opponent, but to a friend.

The urbanity of the diplomat is rarely disturbed, but men of an

artistic temperament are not imperturbable. In moments of stress, particularly when his health was adding to the anxieties of his office, there was occasional evidence of the irascible streak in the nature he has inherited from his father.

The story is told that Sir William Eden was distressed by the persistency with which the barometer at Windlestone registered fair though the heavens were discharging themselves outside. He tapped the glass, but still it stood at fair. Pulling it from the wall he flung it on the lawn, saying, "There, see for yourself, you bloody fool." Parallel, though milder, stories have been related of Sir William's son. But if the Foreign Secretary should have pitched a Blue Book across the room in a moment of irritation, it would have been a salutary relief from the strain of concentrated attention on his tasks.

The preparation of speeches for the House of Commons has been the chief occasion for his anxieties. Many accomplished Parliamentarians suffered from stage-fright, even Gladstone, pleading guilty to nervousness on great occasions. No Minister takes more trouble than Eden with the phrasing of his speeches. Draft follows draft until he is satisfied that the words accurately convey his meaning. In the drawing up of replies to parliamentary questions he is no less exacting. Curzon was remembered for his pedagogic precision. Eden strives for exactitude and he shares the Curzon belief in truthfulness as an essential quality in diplomacy.

Eden is conscientious, Eden is accessible. Except when pressure of affairs made it impossible to do so, he found the opportunity to receive all M.P.s who wished to discuss with him Foreign Office business and to dictate an answer to members who wrote to him.

There were two exacting masters he had to serve—the drive that proceeds from within him and the drive from without in the person of Churchill. Sir Winston used him unsparingly, a measure of the esteem in which he held him. Eden was content to serve to the limits of his capacity.

The story is told that, on a recent birthday, he had had a gruelling day. The Cabinet had argued long and sat late. He had not long been back home before another despatch box was brought in marked "From the Prime Minister, for immediate attention." For once Sir Anthony jibbed. "I'm damned if I'm going through that

as well," he said to the friend with whom he was sharing a drink. "I shouldn't get to sleep before two."

In the morning he telephoned his friend repentantly. "I take back everything I said about Winston. The despatch box from Number Ten: what d'you think I found inside? Two boxes of cigars and a note in Winston's handwriting—'To Anthony on his birthday with good wishes from W. S. C.'"

Relaxation is not easy for a Foreign Secretary. The flow of official papers continues remorselessly. There is no escape from the ubiquitous despatch boxes. They follow him after he has left for home in the evening and they are not to be evaded during the week-end. With a Minister of the secretiveness of old Lord Salisbury, the week-end absence was a time of trial for the Foreign Office staff. Many were the occasions on which the under-Secretary would listen to the wailings of outraged officials when Salisbury had dealt with his papers at Hatfield, in the solitude of his study, and had preserved no record of the process. Eden, more methodical and less secretive, gave no such cause for complaint.

Relaxation for him has meant the countryside. Gardening is his hobby and tennis his sport, interrupted of late years by his ill-health. Now that fitness has returned with health he may be seen on the courts once again.

Gardening was his diversion during the years he used Binderton as his week-end refuge. A smallish Sussex mansion, of mellow eighteenth-century brick, Binderton is not far from Chichester. On one side of the house is a lawn, with shady trees and a glimpse of Goodwood Downs over the wall. On hot days during the Forties, Eden could often be seen asprawl in a deck chair, with writing-pad on knee and Blue Books strewn about him on the grass.

The lawn was his open-air study. Here he would prepare his speeches on Peace Through Strength, a Property-Owning Democracy and other themes dear to his heart for delivery from the Opposition Front Bench or at Tory Rallies in the country.

To the side of the house is an extensive kitchen-garden where, after an hour or two with his Blue Books, Eden would often give the men a hand at digging or hoeing.

Informality was the keynote of his days at Binderton. Guests would drive up expecting to be received by the butler. Half-way between gates and door, Eden would appear in corduroy slacks, an

old sports shirt and gardening boots. Tennis before dinner was the rule on summer days. The guests would emerge in spotless flannels. Eden, still in his stained corduroys, would grin and say, "Why have you brought those?"

A visitor of those days, reporting on his experience, writes: "The tennis incident should have taught me a lesson. But no. I went upstairs and changed for dinner. I had just tied my bow when, through my bedroom door, which was ajar, I glimpsed Anthony pass along the corridor and go downstairs. He was still in the same old slacks and sports shirt. The only difference was that he had tied a silk handkerchief round his neck. That gave me the hint. I changed back into my old hacking jacket and made myself at home.

"Here is another incident that shows just how informally at home we were. He said there was an invitation for the following night to dinner with a neighbour, a man up to the ears in politics and business; would my wife and I care to run over with him? Or should we all stay at Binderton and have a free and easy time? I said, 'Yes, let's stay at Binderton.' Anthony was pleased. 'Yes,' he said, 'that's what I wanted to do. I'm so relieved.' "

Binderton was not the place from which guests would wish to scurry away. There were good paintings on the walls, most of them discreetly modern, the French outnumbering the English. There were good wines in the cellars, and there were good books on the shelves, many of them French, many with cordial words of inscription from their authors. In the arts, as in the diplomatic field, Eden has been devotedly Francophil, as he first testified in the paper on Cézanne that he wrote for an undergraduate society while up at Oxford.

When he returned to the Foreign Office in the autumn of 1951, after six years in opposition, he had to let Binderton go. His London house was No. 4 Chesterfield Street, a slice of Georgian Mayfair, tall, narrow-chested. An earlier tenant had been Beau Brummell. This house he retained until he moved, with his furniture, books and pictures, into the Foreign Secretary's official residence, No. 1 Carlton Gardens. The Chesterfield Street home was a degree more elegant than Binderton. His study had upholstery in Regency stripes, cherry and ivory. Over the fireplace hung a woman's head by Marie Laurencin, faced on the opposite wall by a Dérain landscape.

Here Eden had consultations with his political associates during the election campaign of 1951. One of them so far forgot himself as to begin a sentence: "If we win this election . . ." "No ifs about it," corrected Eden reprovingly. "We *are* going to win." A fortnight later, on October 27, 1951, he was proved right by the slightest of margins. Herbert Morrison, who had hardly had time to hang up his hat and coat, moved out of the Foreign Office and Anthony Eden moved back.

Since undergoing his major operation two years ago, Sir Anthony has recovered his health and the fitness of years gone by. Physically and mentally the improvement has been striking and it has been attended by a nervous relaxation that has produced a man more at ease with life than ever he was in the past. It is not often now that he runs impatient fingers through his silvering hair, and gives other signs of the nerve strains of an eager, restless temperament.

In these latter days he has found relaxation in the peace of the countryside in a retreat set on the Downs. It is a cottage tucked away in the hills in the parish of Broad Chalke, that lies on the Shaftesbury side of Salisbury. It is a tiny place acquired by Lady Eden before her marriage. Here in the peace of Wiltshire the Foreign Secretary, on an occasional week-end, found a haven of refuge from the cares of state.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN THE AMERICAN MIRROR

WHEN Anthony Eden first visited New York in February 1938 after resigning from the Cabinet, two cutters loaded with newspapermen and women—chiefly women—went down the bay to meet him. Eden then was Prince Charming, Mr. Elegance, the man who had made the black homburg known all over the world, the film star statesman. American newspaper editors played up the Eden story for all, and perhaps more than, it was worth day after day.

The serious newspapers "New York Times" and "New York Herald Tribune" published in full the speech he made before the Pilgrim Society and commented upon it enthusiastically. But the tabloid "Daily News" and "Daily Mirror" ran entire picture pages of "the handsomest man in politics". The women reporters and the society editors gushed about his classic features, his long dark eyelashes, his limpid eyes, his clear skin, his wavy hair, his charm and magnetism.

It was embarrassing, but Eden did not betray annoyance. Even during the rush trip in the cutter (the *Queen Mary* was late and Eden was sped to Manhattan by the Coast Guard to keep his speaking engagement), when the questions were mainly about his looks and his clothes, he was patient.

The Press treatment of this 1938 visit was similar to that which Fleet Street extends to visiting film idols, except that it was five times more blatant. Eden was deluged with fan mail from teenage college girls to elderly matrons.

The Eden who goes to the United States now has an entirely different reception. He is regarded as one of the Western world's most experienced statesmen, perhaps the wisest diplomat in office, and second only to Sir Winston Churchill as a British leader. Editors no longer send their women reporters and society gossips to interview him. Chief Editorial writers, political commentators and columnists cover the Eden visits. No one mentions the homburg hat any more, or bothers about the impeccable clothes. What Eden

has to say and which policies he formulates are the American preoccupation.

He has been the front cover man of "Time" and the subject of long profiles in almost every leading magazine. His popularity among Americans is as vast as ever, but it is of a different brand and pattern. No longer is he regarded as a handsome, immaculate wonder-boy, but the mature, brilliantly skilled architect of the Western alliance, the man who last year saved Europe by his exertions and example.

Sir Anthony is better known on the other side of the Atlantic than most of the great personalities on the world stage. He was not the great popular hero that Sir Winston Churchill became during the desperate years of the Second World War. But his record over a long period of time had etched deeply in the public mind a picture of a serious, completely honourable man, who, by his actions at some of the turning-points of history, had become a stabilizing force in a period of uncertainty.

Looking back over the accounts of Sir Anthony's career that have appeared in American newspapers and periodicals, it is interesting to see how this picture has developed from the frivolous sketch to a full-length portrait.

In the early days he was thought of as the typical product of a good English family, and of good English schools. His homburg hat was the symbol by which he was known. It was as familiar as the Churchillian cigar, and in at least one American city his presence was celebrated by a display of such hats in a shop window under a "Welcome to Anthony Eden" sign. People accustomed to the rough and tumble of American political life, where family tradition counts for so little, were inclined to feel that like the Duke of Buccleuch, in the words of the famous "Vanity Fair" portrait, he had fairly withstood the temptations of a high position "acquired without personal exertion".

This feeling was strengthened in some minds by repeated statements that Sir Anthony had been chosen as Sir Winston's successor. The long period of waiting which followed gave rise in the United States to jests and gibes. One of these, recorded by the columnist Leonard Lyons, is of a friend saying to Sir Winston, "You know, if you don't retire soon Anthony will be too old for the job."

Some of the best informed American correspondents in London,

who had seen enough of the Foreign Secretary to know something of the man behind the legend, had assured their readers that he was more than a lucky political heir. In the "New York Times" on April 4, 1954, when it was believed that Sir Winston's retirement was imminent, Drew Middleton wrote—"The standard portrait of him in this country and abroad is that of a debonair, confident, easy sophisticate, interested principally in diplomacy, but playing his part in the gay life of London's West End. The real Anthony Eden contradicts that picture. He wears an air of nonchalance and elegant ease in public—but underneath he is a highly strung person, of great powers of concentration, precise, stubborn, dogged, and given to bitter, sudden gusts of anger. There is iron beneath the charm of Anthony Eden, and it was forged in fierce fires. . . ."

A number of studies of Sir Anthony's career and character portrayed him as a man fully fitted by training and quality to become Prime Minister. Even the earlier accounts had usually given him credit for his front-line experiences in the First World War. From the day when he broke with Neville Chamberlain, he was regarded in the United States as one of the leading opponents of appeasement —and to most Americans the word "appeasement" is like a red rag to a bull. By his resignation from office in 1938, he established for himself a reservoir of credit on the Western side of the Atlantic.

"Americans trust Mr. Eden," wrote Dorothy Thompson, the columnist, "because on the record of the past he has proved himself right, and has had the courage of his intellectual convictions. Right, way back in 1923, when he urged that Great Britain protect herself against attack from the air; right in fighting to protect the system of collective security; right in his repeated efforts for an understanding with Moscow; right in his estimate of Munich as a step towards war instead of peace. And right in the conviction, which he shares with Churchill, that the future of our civilization demands a permanent understanding between all the members of the English-speaking world."

In later years he must sometimes have shuddered at American preoccupation with the "appeasement" label, which has so often been used to damn any form of negotiation or compromise. Willy-nilly he has remained a man whom Americans like because he has once and resoundingly done something of which they completely and wholeheartedly approve.

The two strong elements in the American picture of Sir Anthony —his war record and his record as Foreign Secretary in the Hitler-Mussolini era—have consistently helped to redress the balance when American opinion has turned against him because of some change in the tide of political events. In Anglo-American relations, mutual recrimination is historically as noticeable as mutual goodwill, and the intemperate criticism of Britain that is periodically heard inevitably includes anyone as responsible for British policy as the Foreign Secretary.

The process of praise-and-blame was neatly illustrated in 1954, when the strength of anti-Communist feeling in the United States raised impatience with the more cautious British attitude to fever pitch.

In May of that year, "Time" magazine launched an angry attack on the Foreign Secretary, which it illustrated with the rather lurid cartoon depicting him armed with the Chamberlain umbrella. Annoyed by the British Minister's efforts at Geneva to prevent war over Indo-China, it accused him of making "every hour profitable for the Communists", and asserted that his policy and Churchill's made them look "alarmingly like appeasers".

Within a few weeks there was worse to come. On the eve of his visit to Washington with the Prime Minister in June 1954, Eden had made a speech in the House of Commons proposing a security system for the Far East which he suggested might be somewhat on the lines of Locarno. This speech, according to "Time", revealed the fact that "the United States has no strong, reliable ally".

Arguing that the speech reflected a "soft" attitude towards Communism, one leading columnist, David Lawrence, wrote: "If a single address ever alienated more persons in a single country—and particularly in a national legislature—than did Mr. Eden's address as it was read by most of the members of the Congress of the United States, no one has ever called attention to such a destructive utterance before."

When the British Ministers arrived in Washington, none of the dire happenings occurred that these fulminations had foreshadowed. The visit went off well, partly because Sir Winston Churchill dominated the scene with his accustomed skill, partly because of the calm handling of the situation by President Eisenhower, an old friend of war-time days.

Less than six months later, in November 1954, another Luce publication, "Life" magazine, was saying that, in the words of F. S. Oliver in "The Endless Adventure", Sir Anthony "might someday claim that greatness that 'belongs to the rarest bird that flies' "—the greatness of the "great Foreign Minister". This conclusion was reached by Emmet John Hughes in an appreciation of Eden's career, in which he declared that the action he took to restore unity to the West after France had rejected E.D.C. had made him "a hero of the Atlantic world".

"Sir Anthony Eden," wrote Hughes, "is the kind of man whose character, temperament and habits are perfectly designed to torment all biographers, who find themselves helplessly retreating (like fellow M.P. Woodrow Wyatt) to such epigrams as 'The most extraordinary thing about Anthony Eden is that there is nothing extraordinary about him'. While these words express well enough the kind of faceless image of urbanity that Anthony Eden has seemed ever to turn to the world, they are neither very illuminating nor very accurate."

To Hughes one of the keys to Eden's character was a remark made to him by one of his friends: "More than nine-tenths of his world and life is what he happens to have chosen as his craft—foreign affairs. He lets little else in."

In his record in the First World War, Hughes detected the key to the warm feeling for him which might not be expected to accompany a dedication of this austere kind. "Captain Eden of the lost generation had a special identity," he wrote. "He was one of the thousands of British junior officers who had borne the ugliest burden of the slow, agonizing trench battle that was World War I. Between such officers—those who lived—and their countrymen there grew a singular, indefinable bond of respect and affection, a thanks and a trust no less vivid for being beyond expression. From this has come the warm and changeless popular confidence that has ever followed Eden, politician and diplomat."

Weighing his qualifications for a post in which he would be less the specialist in a necessarily narrow field than the leader responsible for policy in all fields, Hughes observed: "The mind of Churchill recoils in horror from the stale platitudes of an Eden speech. Yet he knows that Eden is the superior performer in the House of Commons: unsurpassed at answering questions, brilliant

at summing up a debate. Partly because he is less fond of the impudent epigram that wins smiles and loses friends, Eden almost certainly will prove the wiser, steadier party leader. . . . Not many men of the Western world are going to do more to shape the future than Sir Anthony; working at his art with the zeal for which he cheered Cézanne; with the gift for patience and compromise that Sir William (his father) quite unintentionally taught him; with the changeless sense of personal loyalty that has kept this Anthony from ever playing Brutus to the weary Churchill; with the loathing of war that few but a young subaltern in the trenches of 1915 could come to know; with the disdain for the peace-killing pacificism that sapped the strength of Britain in the '30s—as none knows better than this man."

It is a good, a fair, and a thoughtful portrait. Other American observers have been in some ways less flattering, but always they have found in Eden something that gives promise of greater things to come.

In June 1954, the "US News and World Report" pictured him in this way: "At 57, he is greying, but still dapper and urbane. As ever, he gives the appearance of smiling confidence, nonchalance. Underneath, however, he is high-strung, taut, inclined to be edgy. Opposition from his colleagues is said to produce stubbornness and sudden, bitter bursts of anger for which he quickly and charmingly makes amends. Mr. Eden is a tireless worker, with a gift for concentration, and a precise memory. But, his critics say, this leads to too much attention to detail, too little regard for major forces that may be at work."

Americans have been much impressed by his capacity for hard work. Writing a series of articles about him for the Hearst newspapers in July 1953, Austin Morris referred to him as Britain's "Beau Brummell Foreign Secretary" and "the glamour boy of British politics", but he also praised his "cool and precise mind". "Eden," he wrote, "is capable of great concentration. He approaches all problems with painstaking patience, that essentially British method which other nations sometimes mistake for dilatoriness."

The British accent, bane of so many British visitors to the United States, does not seem to make Eden less welcome as a speaker in America. In 1938 the National Association of Manufacturers brought him to New York as its principal speaker, and his

style of delivery was much appreciated. The content of his speeches, however, has often been criticized. "Eden's oratorical style," wrote Noel F. Busch in "Life" magazine in August 1943, "the direct antithesis of Churchill's own, is calm, not to say soporific. . . . Eden employs the delayed truism and the qualified platitude." But he added: "To judge Eden's importance to the world by his verbal contributions to it would be as unfair as to judge a picture by its frame. He should be evaluated rather for what he has done and for what he is. He is a classic specimen, complete with flaws, of an England that men like himself made great. England does not alter rapidly, and so he is also, in a sense, a symbol of the future."

In the context of the American scene it does a man no harm to enjoy, on one level, as Eden does, a reputation comparable to that of a popular film star. Americans like and understand film stars. They do not think less well of Eden for being a good looker, and what Beverley Baxter once described as "a natural clothes hanger", or as one magazine once put it, "to the camera born". The secretaries who in a high state of excitement peeped out of their office doors on the occasion of one of his visits to the State Department, anxious to catch a glimpse of him, were displaying a universal curiosity and admiration.

American reporters, the most hard-boiled people anywhere to be found, have a good opinion of Eden. "He probably has a better manner with newspaper men than any other British Minister," Drew Middleton once wrote in the "New York Times".

This is obviously not because he yields the innumerable anecdotes for which Churchill is famous and beloved, or because he is apt to give off memorable phrases, although old hands in Washington still relish his remark there during the fuss over his speech referring to Locarno—"I didn't know Locarno was a dirty word in the United States."

Many stories are told in America, both of his sharp temper and of his thoughtfulness towards his colleagues. The two things seem to cancel each other out. One example of his occasional irritability recalled by British correspondents occurred during a Press conference in his sitting-room at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. His secretary interrupted this to tell him the British Ambassador in Washington was on the telephone and wanted to speak to him urgently. Giving an exclamation of annoyance, the Foreign

Secretary said: "Tell the Ambassador I am busy with the Press. Ask him to ring back later."

Yet on another occasion when his staff had told him that he was to make a broadcast at a certain hour, and had overlooked the fact that there is a three hours' difference of time between New York and San Francisco, he did not raise a murmur when he learned that the speech would have to be ready three hours sooner than he expected. Cancelling his immediate arrangements, he wrote the speech.

When in December 1954 he confessed in the House that he hated going to diplomatic cocktail parties, and remarked, "No one would do such a thing for pleasure, I imagine," he set off a wave of sympathetic leading articles in the American Press.

"He expressed the feelings of some millions of American males," declared the "Baltimore Sun". "Cocktail parties are an abomination." And the "Providence Journal" commented: "We think mighty well of Secretary Eden for unmasking the cocktail party for what it is—a piece of mortal stuffiness unworthy the gay name of a delicate social drink."

On the more serious level, the high opinion Americans have of Eden, whatever day-to-day clashes of opinion may bring forth, is based on the feeling that fundamentally he shares their views about Western civilization. They do not always agree with his policy towards Russia, but they know that at bottom he agrees with them.

This was very well emphasized by James Forrestal in his diary, already mentioned. In an entry for April 21, 1945, he noted: "Anthony Eden dined with Admiral Leahy and me tonight. He was quite gloomy about the Russians. He ascribed most of the difficulty to Molotov's intransigence. He believed that Molotov did not completely inform Stalin, and that when he did talk to him he talked with prejudice towards the British and the United States. He expressed the belief that the chief pivot of Russian policy to-day was an effort to drive a wedge between England and the United States."

Admiral Leahy, whom Forrestal mentions, has high praise for Eden in the story of his work as Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. Recalling his visit to Washington in March 1943, he says of him: "He was an effective spokesman for the British point of view. I heard him make a speech at the National Press Club

during his visit. Eden, like other British political officials of high position that I came to know, seemed to have a better understanding of the general political policy of his country than was the case with many of our own leaders. Anthony Eden knew what Britain wanted."

Eden was once described in the United States as "the diplomat's diplomat", but in recent years he has come to be regarded as something more than that. Americans now usually think of him as a very human person who is also one of the top experts in his chosen field, a man of the world who is also keenly aware of the problems of the ordinary people in it, and, above all, a very representative Englishman.

Don Iddon, to whose recollections I am indebted for some of the touches in the foregoing account, gives the following personal impressions:

"I first met Eden in 1945 at the founding conference of the United Nations at San Francisco. In 1946 aboard the *Aquitania* I came to know him better. We were aboard the *Aquitania* headed for Halifax and Nova Scotia. Eden at the time was out of office, a member of the Parliamentary delegation that was visiting the New World. We used to pace the deck together. We played table tennis together, and usually Eden won. I remember he made a brilliant speech at the church service on Sunday and although he had carefully prepared it, he gave the impression that he was speaking just from a few notes. Afterwards he gave me the speech which he had written in longhand on the ship's notepaper.

"During the voyage he would invite groups of passengers, mainly businessmen, into his cabin and give them a background to the political situation. When we docked at Halifax, Canadian newspapermen came aboard and shot questions at him. The Socialists in the delegation were irked, and one said pompously: 'Mr. Eden is no longer in office now. We have a Labour Government.'

"Eden endorsed this. I spoke up and said that in or out of office Eden was news, and that was what my Canadian colleagues and myself were interested in.

"Since then I have seen Eden almost every time he has visited New York. We have had an occasional drink in his hotel suite and once an enormous crowd gathered in the corridors of the Waldorf Astoria when Eden, myself and a couple of friends went for a drink

at the men's bar. He does not mind signing autographs as long as the requests are not too many, but he dislikes having his photograph taken when he is speaking. 'I don't like,' he explains, 'being under camera fire.'

"During his illness in 1953 when he underwent his operation in Boston, I wrote to him. A little later, during his convalescence, he asked me to lunch with him at the house of the John Barry Ryans, at Newport. I did not know whether the luncheon would be formal or not, but anyway I went in a dark blue suit and found Eden in a black and white silk shirt, a silk kerchief, grey flannels and red slippers. He was very thin and told me he only weighed ten stone. He mixed me a martini and made himself a tomato juice.

"He said that he had been much more impressed with American commercialized television than he had expected to be. After lunch we chatted for a bit, and I could see that he was tired, and I talked to Mrs. Eden for a few minutes. She is his great strength and inspiration.

"I had only been back at my hotel room and had just finished writing my piece when the 'phone rang. It was Eden. He said, 'I am just wondering what you might have written, old boy.' And I told him it was mainly colour and a confident assertion that he would soon be fit again. He is quite a worrier, as all politicians should be, about what gets into print about him.

"My despatch was drastically cut and also changed in London. One sentence horrified me, 'and then the Foreign Secretary interviewed Don Iddon by way of a change'. I wrote to the Foreign Secretary to say that I hoped the punch-line, which was not mine, had not jarred on him. He replied—not at all, he was quite amused.

"He never fails to reply to a letter or a cable within a matter of days. He received many thousands of letters, cables and telegrams of congratulation when he was made Knight of the Garter. I sent him a little note. Three days later I received the following cable: 'Thank you so much for your kind letter. I am most touched by this generous thought. Anthony Eden, SOSFA'. For the ill-informed, SOSFA means Secretary of State Foreign Affairs.

"Eden has had a good press for most of his political life. He deserves it—he is one of the journalist's best friends."

CHAPTER XXIV

CHURCHILL'S SUCCESSOR—THE EDEN ENIGMA

IF an extended term of apprenticeship is a qualification for the post of Premier, Sir Anthony Eden was better equipped than any of his predecessors on taking over at 10 Downing Street. It was as long ago as 1942 that his name was first submitted to the Sovereign as Prime Minister designate.

In the midst of the war, Ministers in Whitehall shared the perils of the times. No man was more exposed than Winston Churchill, who disdained the hazards of war, holding that what was fated would befall. Notoriously indifferent to physical danger, he survived half a dozen narrow escapes from death. His travels abroad by sea and air between Washington and Moscow involved him in recurrent risks.

In 1942, when he was preparing to fly the Atlantic for urgent discussions with the President after the attack on Pearl Harbour, the possibility that he might perish on the flight was not to be overlooked. Were he to be lost, who would take over the burden of responsibilities?

It was a problem for the Sovereign who, by constitutional custom, may seek the guidance of an outgoing Prime Minister on the selection of his successor. Here, however, there was no imminent vacancy, but only a contingent risk. There is a natural reluctance to invite a man in vigorous health to contemplate and provide for the circumstances of his own decease.

King George the Sixth was accustomed to receive his first Minister week by week. Shortly before the Washington trip he brought up the question: who should succeed were Winston to become a casualty of war? A few days later Churchill gave his considered reply by letter, submitting his formal advice that the choice should fall on Eden. Sir Anthony was recommended as the outstanding Minister in the largest political party in the House of Commons and as one "who I am sure will be found capable of

conducting your Majesty's affairs with the resolution, experience and capacity which these grievous times require".

It was a circumstance without parallel in our political history, nor has a Prime Minister designate continued for so long a term to serve as subordinate to the Minister he is designed to follow. Providence brought Winston Churchill through the hazards of war in common with his Ministers, one of whom alone was a casualty. Three elections followed, four Ministries succeeded to the famous Coalition and Anthony Eden remained to serve as loyal and devoted colleague under Churchill.

As the years went by and the Old Incomparable continued to direct affairs, there was speculation about the strains that might be imposed on an ambitious and impatient Eden. It was a complete misreading that none could make who was aware of the relations between these two men. Here, again, was a situation without parallel.

The cynic has said that in politics there are no enduring loyalties at the top. It was written before the example of Churchill and Eden provided the exception. For twenty years these two men developed the harmony of their association. Their family traditions, their liberal-minded approach to affairs, their comradeship in war—these things contributed to their community of outlook. But there were others of whom the same might be written. The harmony of the association of these two had deeper roots that go down to the bedrock of character, to the fundamentals of man's faith, to those basic elements, stronger and more elemental than the promptings of his reason, that determine his unconscious reckoning of good and evil. Somewhere in the unplumbed depths of personality that men call their souls are rooted the ties that linked these men, enabling them to rise above the superficial divergences of their natures—the one so turbulent, so dogmatic, at times so disdainful of opinions other than his own.

By the unanimous testimony of those who worked with him, Winston Churchill was no accommodating colleague and no easy chief to serve. From the first Eden appears never to have been in difficulties. The man who had not found it possible to serve with Chamberlain would not have been expected to run in easy harness with Chamberlain's successor. Eden found the masterful preferable to the martinet. Incidents such as Chamberlain's despatch

of the letter to Mussolini—"I did not show it to Anthony—I had the feeling he would object to it"—could not have occurred with Churchill. It would have been unthinkable.

As mutual respect and trust grew with the years, it was found that the masterful was not proof against the master of diplomacy, and that the overbearing had sometimes to give way. In latter days the understanding between the two Ministers was complete. No major step by either man was taken without consultation of the other. Rarely in our political affairs has such a partnership persisted, so intimate and so loyal.

There was a moment when the succession nearly slipped from Eden's grasp. In June 1953 Sir Winston suffered a stroke, which left him for a week completely paralysed on the left side. Had his indisposition been prolonged—or had he heeded the medical advice pressed on him to retire—Eden would inevitably have lost his chance. In that same month Eden's doctors, despairing of his life, decided to send him by air to the United States for an operation that could be performed nowhere else. Whether he would survive no one could predict, and at the best it would require weeks of rest before he could hope to return to public life.

For a party in opposition an interlude of a few months without a permanent leader may be a matter of no great consequence, but for a Ministry in office there can be no temporizing. "The Queen's Government must go on" is an inescapable constitutional requirement. It would have been necessary, with Sir Winston incapacitated, for a Prime Minister to have been appointed. Clearly the Queen could not have sent for the absent Sir Anthony.

What considerations entered Churchill's mind at that time have not been made known. But there are those who believe that one of the reasons that induced him to disregard medical advice and remain in office was a determination that Eden should not be cheated of the succession.

Churchill's choice for successor was backed by the endorsement of the Conservative Party. From the time of Munich until the outbreak of war a year later, there had been uneasy speculation among Tory leaders about the future. The Conservative Party is happiest when it has not only a Leader firmly in the saddle, but can see a successor clearly marked out—not one, necessarily, to whom it is

formally committed, but a man who could take over should the event require it.

In the months immediately before the war, Neville Chamberlain stood high in the esteem and, indeed, affection of his party. But he was approaching seventy, the age at which Baldwin had retired, declaring that in modern conditions no man could expect to carry the burden of the Premiership beyond that age. The succession was obscure and disturbing. No one questioned Sir Samuel Hoare's seniority, but the ill-fated Hoare-Laval agreement had shaken even loyal Conservatives, and the prospect of a Hoare premiership was not considered to be inviting. Sir Thomas Inskip, even before his unhappy display as Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, had never shown qualities of leadership. Sir Kingsley Wood, though his appeal to the party in the country was considerable, could not be considered eligible. Oliver Stanley at that time had not flowered as he did a few years later in political maturity: and R. A. Butler, at thirty-six, seemed no more than one who might come along nicely later. Harold Macmillan was a back-bencher with a caustic tongue that he delighted to use against his own leaders.

There was nothing to build on for the immediate future. On the outbreak of war, with the return of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden to office in a Conservative Government, the problem was solved.

When the dying Neville Chamberlain resigned the Conservative leadership in October, 1940, and Churchill was appointed to succeed him, there was a move to elect Anthony Eden as Deputy Leader—an appointment that had never been made in the party's history. The move originated with a few Conservative M.P.s who thought it might be wise if a somewhat safer party man were at hand to keep an eye on the erratic genius of the new leader. It failed to secure general support, and no such motion was put to the election meeting. Nevertheless there were few who did not realize that Anthony Eden was from that time leader-designate.

Fifteen years have passed since then, fifteen years for Eden as political heir-at-law. The onlooker began to speculate on the effect on Eden's relations with the party as the years took their toll and the grey-haired man of middle-age succeeded to the elegance of youth. The years made no difference. Eden's hold on the party was as strong as he was nearing sixty as when he was in his

forties. The party remained as loyal to him as he had been to the party.

Whatever political virtues Eden may be said to lack, loyalty to his party is not one. His resignation in 1938 was a step reluctantly taken. There had been rumours of a break for some months before it came. He endured much before the limits of his tolerance were reached. There was to be some criticism of him here by those who do not appreciate that while it may need courage to quit at the price of a career, it requires courage of another sort, and much forbearance, to remain in office despite mounting resentment and the urge to be gone.

When he had parted with Neville Chamberlain it was feared that he might become the leader of a revolt. It was noted that he made no such attempt and that he resisted the considerable pressure placed upon him to align himself with the militant Churchill. In the months that followed his resignation he spoke rarely in Parliament or the country. When he did speak his main theme was the need for national unity, and in developing his argument he did little to disturb the unity of the party. No one could accuse him of seeking to work his passage home. He did not follow either of the two paths by which ex-Ministers may contrive their return to office—he neither curried favour nor stimulated revolts to acquire a nuisance value. He remained loyal, and in so doing won a respect among all sections of the party that he has ever since retained.

The annals of his career surveyed, Sir Anthony Eden emerges in the roundness of the public figure, but something of the enigma still remains. No man in affairs to-day conceals himself as does he behind the political personality. The human foibles and weaknesses are suppressed. Rarely in the entire range of his speeches is there a personal touch, certainly no personal confession. He has preferred to be the man in the political mask.

There will be much delving in future to reach the human being behind the public figure. Little assistance will be received from Eden as the probing proceeds. It is not from mere shyness nor by any lack of awareness that this concealment of his character has continued, nor, assuredly, must it be attributed to the absence of individuality behind the mask. Behind the composed exterior is a character that is singularly varied and rich in its human aspects. The

Eden of public life is lacking in human feeling. The Anthony behind the mask often feels too much.

To survive the kicks and buffetings of political life a man must be protected by a tough hide. One need not look long at a bevy of politicians to be assured that they are as effectively protected as the rhinoceros. Eden has not been so well equipped. He is the artist turned politician. He has the artist's sensitivity and has had to contrive for himself the protective covering with which nature ill provided him.

The process began at an early age. The boy formed the self-protective habits that the man developed, the boy who was son of that distressing parent Sir William Eden.

The boyhood days of Windlestone give the clue to Anthony Eden's character. He is essentially an Eden, end product of the line that incorporated those varied elements inherited from stout warriors, loyal cavaliers, men of talent, capability and achievement in public life, with, superimposed, the artistic strain of recent generations.

Heredity evolved the man Anthony Eden. His father produced the public figure. Contact with Sir William Eden imposed strains few adults would willingly endure. For children, raillery, however good-natured, and sarcasm, although without the sting of malice, are immensely wounding. Lacking in any form of defence they can do no more than curl up, withdraw within themselves snail fashion, and expose no sensitive target for attack. At the outset of his life Sir Anthony learned his first lesson that self-effacement is the easiest form of self-protection.

There is another factor in what are termed parental influences that has had a determining effect. The uncontrollable rages that possessed the father were a warning to the son. He came to realize that he had inherited, though to a lesser degree, the father's quickness of temper. Marking the danger, he placed himself under strict self-discipline. Throughout his public life he has ridden himself under a tight rein. He has fought his temper down and has established control. It has added to the curbing effects of his self-effacement. It has become a conviction with him that it is wrong to allow the weakness of temper to escape and in bad taste to display one's feelings.

One more lesson drawn from youth's experiences must be added

to understand the Eden of public life. The sharp sayings from his father that taught him self-protection were a demonstration of the damaging consequences of words that wound. He drew the conclusion that has guided him in politics and diplomacy. Not for him the retorts that humiliate. Why sear a man's pride and produce a life-long enemy? The soft answer not merely turns away wrath but promotes understanding and contributes to the fulfilment of one's ultimate purpose. As his career proceeded he could mark examples to prove the case—how Baldwin's manner could charm away dissent, how Neville Chamberlain, the partisan, provoked anger and resentment amongst his opponents.

Rigid self-control, self-effacement continuously applied to personal feeling—these are the restraints that have produced the Eden of public life. They are not the characteristics that have belonged to successful politicians, party leaders and prime ministers. Churchill, Lloyd George, Baldwin, Asquith—these were men who displayed rather than masked their personalities. How, then, did the choice fall upon Anthony Eden as successor to Sir Winston as party leader and Prime Minister? He was chosen not merely because he was the best man available for the job—his selection was grounded more deeply than that.

Eden was accepted as a man possessed in high degree of the qualities for leadership. Even by comparison with Churchill he was no inconsiderable figure. Against the background of the average he was seen to be outstanding—the one fresh figure of first magnitude (to use Winston's phrase) arising out of the generation ravaged by the war. He was a man of brains, judgment, and ability, a man who had proved his ability as administrator at the War Office and his skill in diplomacy at a score of conferences. In the House of Commons he was popular, esteemed, an able speaker and no mean debater. As an electoral asset there was all that a party manager could ask—good looks, charm, an appeal to women and, no negligible matter, an admirable television manner. Beyond these things were the basic points of character—loyalty and integrity. He was a man who had resigned high office rather than sacrifice a principle and who had never sought to make personal capital out of his differences with his leaders. He had proved himself in the most searching of political tests.

As a parliamentary force, Eden has rarely shown his strength.

As Foreign Secretary he suffered a double handicap. The duties of his department made him a frequent absentee from Westminster. Touring the world in search of peace, he visited the capitals of Europe and ranged the continents Eastward to Bangkok, Westward to San Francisco. Continuity in the handling of international affairs deprived him of the opportunity of taking part in the debates of domestic politics.

As a speaker he suffered the penalty of Foreign Office prose. In a field where words and phrases are scanned in the world's capitals to see what fine shades of meaning they can be made to convey, it is understandable that the Foreign Secretary should hesitate to tear up his brief, with all its platitudes, and express himself vigorously in his own words.

The prepared speech has been Eden's enemy. He has always put it over well, very much better than did either Bevin or Morrison, but while it may have been a pleasant performance, it made little rhetorical impact. On rare occasions he was heard to speak out regardless, and then he showed that he does not lack the leader's ability to hit out and hit hard. There was the occasion, to which I have referred, when he answered the critics on Greece. More recently he showed his political mettle when defending the plan for a German contribution to Western defence early in 1954. This, too, was a winding-up speech in which he was able to speak without elaborately prepared notes.

"We have the same doubts and the same memories as you," he told his critics of the Opposition. "There is one young subaltern who will never forget going to a casualty station during the first Battle of the Somme, and searching among, literally, heaps of wounded for the riflemen of his own company. These are the sort of experiences that are never forgotten." It was emotional, and it was sincere, and the House listened with growing approval.

Without a pause he went on to win cheers from his Conservative supporters by a detailed reminder of how the Labour Government, Aneurin Bevan and Harold Wilson being members of it, had been committed to the policy he was championing. It was of no use for opponents such as those to talk like detached spirits. "They are the authors, and they are responsible," he declared, with a sweep of the arm.

Eden ended on a different note with a passage about a visit to

Germany and the manner in which a hall of students had cheered his appeal to German youth to co-operate in the building of a new Europe and so redeem their country's past. Few members in the House that night could doubt that they were hearing the authentic note of leadership. Nor could they doubt it that evening in mid-March, 1955, when he wound up a debate on an Opposition motion inviting censure of the Government for failing to call high level talks or secure agreement on disarmament. It was a forthright speech, very much to the liking of the packed benches behind him. Casting aside his usual cloak of caution, he scored all the party points he could in presenting a telling contrast between the records of the two Governments, Socialist and Conservative, in their work for peace.

The party leader, ready for the cut and thrust of debate, has not been extinguished by years of rigid self-control, but it is by the voice of reason and persuasiveness that he has won his authority in the House of Commons. Churchill has been howled down when party spirit has been heated. Eden has never been refused a hearing. His command of the House is the measure of his skill as Parliamentarian.

At political meetings his hold over his audience is no less sure. In his own constituency his popularity is such that his hearers seem to hang on his every word. His ease and charm of manner, his memory for the faces and names of those he has met, the impression he gives of genuine pleasure at being amongst his friends, and his unfailing approachability have endeared him to the electors of Warwick.

Politicians prefer a partisan for leader and give their loudest cheers to the fighting speech. There are dangers in this. It gives opportunity to the ambitious man with a talent for invective to exploit the convictions of others to his own advantage. The national interest is subordinated to party ends. Gresham's Law operates in politics as well as in finance. Bad politics, like bad money, drive out the good. The result—Thucydides pictured it in ancient Greece:

> Love of power, operating through greed and through personal ambition, was the cause of evils. To this must be added violent fanaticism. Leaders of the parties had programmes which appeared admirable—

on the one side political equality for the masses, on the other safe and sound government for the aristocracy. But in professing to serve the public interest they were seeking to win prizes for themselves. In the struggle for ascendancy nothing was barred; parties were deterred neither by claims of justice nor by the interests of the state.

From these perils, not to be minimized in our day, the leadership of Anthony Eden may be relied upon to preserve us. Whatever he may lack as partisan, he is in no degree wanting as national leader. The long years in diplomacy have attested his qualities. He has patience that Bevin placed first amongst the requirements of a Foreign Secretary. He has loyalty, and precision that Harold Nicolson puts on the list, a cultivated calm and truthfulness, the essential that Callières postulated in his classic manual on the diplomat's craft—"moral influence is the most essential qualification of a diplomatist; he must be a man of the strictest honour". Eden's integrity has never been in question. He applied to international affairs a sense of moral values that his pre-war colleagues found to be disturbing, judging events by the reckoning of absolute right and wrong. Under his leadership there will be no debasement of the currency of politics.

Eden has been accepted by the electors since League of Nations days as a statesman of liberal mind. In the gradations of party placings his position is not established. None look upon him as being to the Left as they regard R. A. Butler, or to the Right, as they looked on Lyttelton or look on Lennox-Boyd. Eden is sufficiently progressive to please the Tory Reformer of an earlier Parliament or the One Nation Group of to-day, but not so energetically progressive as to engender any fears on the Right that his Conservatism may be tinged with pink. Under him sound and sane progress is confidently expected with the essentials in the fabric of society firmly held. Were there any doubt about that in the minds of Conservative M.P.s it would concern that word "firmly". The Conservatives were genuinely indignant with the "Punch" cartoon after last year's Geneva settlements that depicted the Chamberlain-like Eden with the umbrella. Nevertheless doubts do exist in some minds as to whether he is the man to offer the most robust resistance to pressure, either from abroad or from the trades unions at home.

Here those who know Sir Anthony best assert that they misread

the man. Behind the flexibility of the diplomat, they aver, is a hard core of Eden obstinacy.

Doubts on this point arise from comparison between Eden and Churchill. It is a comparison that is inevitable, one to which only the strongest political force would willingly submit. How many reputations are there amongst the long line of Prime Ministers that would not lose in lustre when set against the incomparable Churchill?

Eden has distinction enough to claim his place in the line of statesmen who have sat in 10 Downing Street as First Minister of the Crown. He is unchallengeable for the knowledge gained at first hand of the world, its affairs and its leaders.

In this atom-menaced generation the conduct of foreign affairs has an importance for humanity that transcends all other tasks of politics. In days when a statesman's indiscretion, or a chance miscalculated may touch off the agencies of devastation, there is cause for satisfaction and assurance that Britain's leadership is entrusted to the man who has devoted a lifetime to the intricacies of diplomacy and the pursuit of peace. For the thirty years since Locarno his purpose has been the same, and he has pursued it with fidelity and steadfastness.

Nations in their dealings with each other have maintained a consistent standard of self-interest. Might has rarely been subordinated to right. The self-interest of kings and statesmen, the commerical interest of communities, have been the touchstone of international conduct. Kingdoms, Empires and Republics have not behaved to each other as would honourable men. From time to time the note of morality has been diffidently and tremulously raised. Anthony Eden's voice has been heard in the same cause.

With the establishment of the League of Nations idealists looked for the realization of their dreams of the ordering of affairs between the nations in a world of peace directed by justice. In this experiment in the application of equity in international life Eden played a leading part on the side of truth, justice and morality. The experiment failed. The idealists found that their dreams were ahead of political possibilities. In a later generation we have come, regretfully, to concede that truth is only another argument, and that what is right in Yorkshire may be questioned in Ohio and

rejected in Odessa. None the less, the experiment was not in vain. From the failures of the past emerge the successes of the future.

It was in the light of his experience with the old League that Eden co-operated in the founding of the new League that is known as the United Nations. If the idealist's dreams at last come true and the millennium is realized, the peoples will look back on the pioneers who took the first steps towards establishing the world order of justice and peace. Among those in honoured place there is reason that the name Robert Anthony Eden should be conspicuously inscribed.

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